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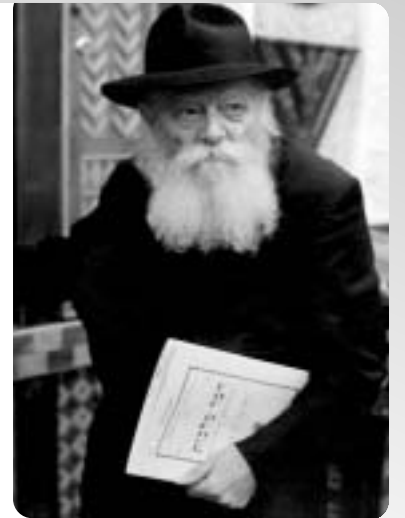
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NOTHING ELSE BUT TORAH

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS BA'MIDBAR; 2ND DAY OF SIVAN, 5750

1. This week's Torah portion, Parshas BaMidbar is always read before the festival of Shavuos, "the season of the giving of our Torah." Usually, as this year, it is read on the Shabbos directly preceding Shavuos. In other years, Parshas Naso is read directly before the holiday and Parshas BaMidbar is read on the preceding week.

On the surface, Shavuos shares a more apparent connection with Naso than with BaMidbar. Naso means "lift up" and thus relates to the giving of the Torah which brought the Jews to a true state of elevation. G-d "chose us from all the nations and gave us His Torah," giving us the opportunity to establish a bond with His will and wisdom.

In contrast, BaMidbar, meaning "in the desert," refers to a seemingly undesirable place, a barren land, unfit for human habitation.[28] Why did G-d choose to give the Torah in such a place?

One of the resolutions of this question is that Torah study requires absolute and total concentration. When a person studies Torah, nothing else should be on his mind. He must remove all worldly matters – and even

any other Torah subjects[29] – from his thoughts and concentrate on the subject he is studying.[30]

This is further emphasized by the Torah passage which describes the giving of the Torah which begins: "In the third month... on this day, they came to the Sinai desert." The mention of "the third month"[31] underscores the relation of the Torah to the number three. Similarly, our Sages describe the Torah as "a threefold light."

There are three elements[32] to Torah study: G-d's giving the Torah, the Jews receiving it, and the Torah itself. The connection of the number three to the Sinai desert which, as explained above, implies that while a person is studying, there is nothing in his world but the Torah indicates that, in regard to these three elements, G-d's giving the Torah and its reception by the Jews are secondary, and the primary concern is the Torah itself.

The Torah is "one Torah," a single unified entity.[33] When a person studies it, he becomes totally absorbed in this unity as our Sages declared, "The Holy One, blessed be He, Israel, and the Torah are one."

In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe explains how this unity is established. When a person studies Torah, his intellect – which is one with the person himself –

becomes one with the subject matter in a "perfect unity to which there is no resemblance or comparison in physical terms, to be totally one and unified."

[This concept is also alluded to in the name Tanya. To explain: Tanya is referred to as, "The Written Torah of Chassidus,"[34] which is "the soul of the Torah." Accordingly, the wording in the text is extremely precise just as the wording of the Written Torah is far more precise than that of the oral law. Thus, the first word of the text, which has been used by the Rebbeim as the name of the text, was surely carefully chosen.[35]

This raises a question because the name Tanya has no apparent connection to the goal of the text, which as the Alter Rebbe writes on the title page is "based on the verse, 'The matter is very close to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, to accomplish it,' to explain how it is very close...."

This difficulty can be resolved as follows: On a simple level,[36] the name Tanya which means "It has been taught," alludes to the importance of Torah study. Although Tanya will open a person up to a deeper level of service of G-d, to love and fear of Him, its essential emphasis is on the study of P'nimius HaTorah, achieving a perfect

unity between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of G-d. This concept is so fundamental to the text that it was alluded to in its very name.

In this context, it is worthy to stress the importance of studying Tanya, and in particular, its opening chapters. There are those who feel that since they have studied Tanya previously, it is unnecessary for them to continue this study and would rather study other subjects in Chassidus. This is a wrong perspective. Tanya must be constantly studied, in particular, the opening chapters including the preface. (This study should come in addition to the study of Tanya within the study of Chitas.)]

The emphasis on the study of Torah to the extent that nothing else exists in one's world but the Torah, also relates to the content of Parshas BaMidbar, which describes the census of the Jews. Rashi explains that taking this census reveals the dearness of the Jews before G-d, "because they are dear to Him, He counts them always."

There are 600,000 Jewish souls.[37] Similarly, the Rabbis teach that the name Yisroel is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, "There are 600,000 letters in the Torah." [38] Nevertheless, despite this multiplicity, ultimately, both the Torah and the Jewish people are single indivisible entities. The "one people" are connected with the "one Torah" and the "one G-d," to the extent that "Israel, the Torah, and the Holy One, blessed be He, are all one." This is the ultimate expression of the dearness of the Jewish people.

This relates to our Sages' description of Sinai as the mountain from which "hatred descended to the world." This statement can be explained as follows: It is written: "He placed the world in their hearts," i.e., G-d placed the future of the world in the heart of every man. The existence of the entire world depends on man. Through his service in worldly matters, "turning away from evil" and "doing

good," man has the power to correct the entire world.

Thus, when there is nothing else in a Jew's world but Torah, he brings about a parallel situation in the world at large. All the undesirable aspects of the world are negated, or transformed into good, and it is revealed how the entire world exists only for the sake of the Torah.

May we receive the Torah with happiness and inner feeling. (This is

The world will be elevated to a state where it will be revealed that, "Everything which G-d created in this world was created solely for His glory." "Glory" refers to Torah. Thus, it will be revealed that there is nothing else in the entire world but the Torah.

the blessing the Previous Rebbe would give for the holiday of Shavuot.) And may we merit the age when, "a new Torah will emerge from Me," with the coming of Moshiach.

2. The above concepts can be connected with the sixth[39] chapter of Pirkei Avos, which we study this week. This chapter begins with the statement: "The Sages taught in the language of the Mishna: 'Blessed be He who chose you and your teachings.'"

The word "Sages" refers to each and every Jew who is a member of "a wise and understanding nation." These qualities are revealed through the Torah. Therefore, a Jew's behavior must be permeated by the Torah, it being the only thing in his world.

Pirkei Avos continues:

"The tablets were the work of G-d and the writing was the writing of G-d, charus ('engraved') on the tablets." Do not read charus, but cherus ('freedom'). There is no free man except one who occupies himself with the study of Torah.

The Shaloh explains that when our Sages teach, "Do not read..., but..." their intention is to add a new interpretation, but not to negate the simple meaning of the verse. Thus, the teaching mentioned above reveals that the Torah is connected with both freedom and engraving.

Chassidus explains that engraved letters are unique in that they are an integral part of (and not a separate entity from) the object on which they are written. When a Jew studies Torah in a manner of "engraving," he becomes unified entirely with the Torah he studies. His entire existence becomes Torah. This leads to true freedom; he is lifted above all worries and distraction.

This has an effect in the world at large as the chapter continues, "Whoever repeats a concept in the name of its author brings redemption to the world." [40] The world, which in its present state, conceals G-dliness, will become permeated by the quality of redemption.

Thus, the world will be elevated to a state where it will be revealed that, "Everything which G-d created in this world was created solely for His glory." "Glory" refers to Torah, as Pirkei Avos mentions beforehand, "There is no glory other than Torah." Thus, it will be revealed that there is nothing else in the entire world, but the Torah.

The chapter concludes, "The L-rd will reign forever and ever." According

to the Kabbalistic tradition when the letters of “va’ed” (translated as “ever”) are transposed the word “echad,” “one,” is produced, implying that the unity of “the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One,” will be revealed “forever and ever.” This will be revealed, not only to the Jews, but also to the nations of the world as it is written, “Then, I will transform the nations to a clear speech, that they may all call on the name of the L-rd.”

3. Our Sages teach that the Jewish children were chosen as the guarantors of the Torah. Therefore, it is appropriate that they, even infants of a very young age,[41] should be present in the synagogue to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments. This can be accomplished without great difficulty since in most communities, there are several synagogues, and often, several different times of prayer at a single synagogue. Therefore, the entire family need not attend the Torah reading together and a convenient time can be arranged so that all Jewish children can hear the Ten Commandments.

Before the Torah reading, it is proper to explain to the children how important receiving the Torah is and how they should prepare to receive it. Although G-d gives the Torah in a generous manner, He desires that the Jews prepare themselves to receive it. This will allow them to receive the Torah in a full and complete manner.

Similarly, adults should prepare to receive the Torah by increasing their Torah study. In particular they should increase the study of P’nimius HaTorah (Torah’s mystic dimensions). This realm of study shares a connection with the holiday of Shavuos. To explain: Our Sages interpret the verse, “Honey and milk will be under your tongue,” as a reference to P’nimius HaTorah, stating, “Subjects which are as sweet as honey and milk should be ‘under your tongue,’ (i.e., not studied openly).” On Shavuos, it is customary to eat sweet milchig foods, indicating that this is a time when this realm of

knowledge is given prominence.

This is also reflected by the narrative of the giving of the Torah when G-d’s chariot,[42] associated with the deeper aspects of P’nimius HaTorah, was revealed to every Jew. Even though ordinarily, one begins with the study of the revealed dimensions of Torah law, when the Torah was given, an exception was made and, at the very outset, even before the declaration of the Ten Commandments, G-dliness was revealed.

The vision of G-dliness perceived

Since the revelation at Mount Sinai included an emphasis on Maaseh Merkava, P’nimius HaTorah, it is appropriate that the preparation for receiving the Torah anew should also emphasize this subject matter.

by the Jews was also comprehended intellectually. Not only did they see G-dliness, they also internalized this vision. Thus, our Sages explained that at the giving of the Torah, the Jews “saw what was normally heard and heard what was normally seen,” implying that the revelation effected, not only the power of sight, but also the power of hearing, which is connected with the power of understanding.

Since the revelation at Mount Sinai included an emphasis on Maaseh

Merkava, P’nimius HaTorah, it is appropriate that the preparation for receiving the Torah anew should also emphasize this subject matter. This will also effect our study of Nigleh (the teachings of Torah law). P’nimius HaTorah is called, “the soul of Torah,” and Nigleh, its body. It is natural for the body to be drawn after the soul.

The increase in Torah study should begin this Shabbos. As mentioned several times throughout the year, on Shabbos, there should be an effort to “gather together groups to study Torah.” Surely, this applies on the Shabbos which precedes the giving of the Torah. Therefore, it is proper to utilize the remaining hours of this Shabbos to gather together Jews to study Torah communally (preferably, in a manner of “When ten people sit and study Torah...” or in even greater numbers as it is written, “Among the multitude of people is the glory of the king”). Simultaneously, these gatherings should also be used to mention all the preparations for the holiday of Shavuos.[43]

May the “running to the performance of a mitzvah,” the efforts to gather Jews in shul for Torah study, lead to the time when we run to greet Moshiach. Indeed, there will be no need to run, for Moshiach will come directly here to the Previous Rebbe’s shul and house of study. Then, “a great congregation will return here,” the Jewish people, together with all the elements of the world which they elevated, will come back to Eretz Yisroel, to Jerusalem, and to the Beis HaMikdash.

4. We can also derive a lesson from the day on which Shavuos is celebrated. Our Sages teach that on the day of Alef, the first day of Pesach, will fall Tav, Tisha B’Av. On the day of Beis, the second day of Pesach, will fall Shin, the holiday of Shavuos.

This implies that the experience of “the season of our freedom” on Pesach will transform all the negative factors of Tisha B’Av into good, bringing about

the ultimate redemption.

The association of Shavuot with the second day of Pesach is significant this year since it falls on Wednesday, “the day on which the luminaries were suspended [in the heavens].” The term “luminaries” refers primarily to the sun and the moon. They can be associated with the written law and the oral law respectively. Both these were given to Moshe on Mount Sinai. The entire oral

law including even “every new concept which an experienced Sage will develop” was included in that initial revelation.

On Shavuot, may we receive the Torah anew with joy and inner feeling and may this lead to our receiving “the new Torah that will emerge from Me,” in the Messianic age. Our Sages declared, “All the appointed times for Moshiach’s coming have passed and

the matter is dependent only on t’shuva.” Our Sages also teach that even a fleeting thought of t’shuva is enough for one to be considered a completely righteous man. Thus, through t’shuva we will nullify the reason for the exile, our sins, as we recite in prayer, “because of our sins we were exiled from our land.” When the reason for the exile ceases to exist, the exile itself will end and we will proceed together to greet Moshiach.

NOTES:

28. In particular, the Sinai Desert is associated with negativity as evident from our Sage’s association of the name Sinai with, “the descent of hatred to the nations of the world.”

[This comment is somewhat problematic: Since G-d is the ultimate of good, why should the giving of His Torah bring about anything negative? This concept can be explained in the context of the concept described later on, that Torah study requires absolute concentration. Thus, when a person is in the midst of Torah study, not only should he be removed from worldly concerns, he should hate – i.e., be unable to bear – them. The Hebrew word for “world,” “*olam*,” is related to the word, “*helem*,” meaning “concealment.” Any worldly matters conceal G-dly light and thus are the direct opposite of “the light of Torah.”]

29. The Torah is “one Torah,” and, thus, every Torah concept is connected with the essence of Torah, and thus, with all other Torah concepts. Therefore, the study of any particular Torah subject can shed light on others. This, however, is an advanced level of study. At the outset, when studying, one must concentrate utterly on the matter at hand.

30. Although Pirkei Avos emphasizes that we should study Torah with the intent to teach, this does not mean that while one is studying one should think about teaching. On the contrary, doing so will prevent one from absorbing the subject matter correctly.

31. The first month, the month of Nisan, is “the season of our freedom,” when the Jews are freed from all disturbing influences. The second month, Iyar, reflects the unique heritage of the Jewish people for its name is

an acronym for the names, Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, and Rachel.

[Alternatively, when Iyar is spelled with a single Yud, it is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, “I, the L-rd, am your healer.” These two months prepare us for the uniqueness of the third month.

32. Note also the explanation (See the Sichos of Shabbos B’Har-B’Chukosai) that the number three also indicates how the Torah must permeate through the three dimensions of our personality and the three spiritual worlds, Bria, Yetzira, and Asiya.

33. Furthermore, the Torah is connected with the level of yechida, absolute oneness, which is above the level of echad.

34. The comparison is born out by the fact that just as the Written Torah is composed of five books, there are five sections of Tanya. Furthermore, in the Written Torah, the first four books are of primary importance, and the fifth book is referred as Mishneh Torah, “the review of the Torah.” Similarly, in Tanya, the first four sections are of primary importance, and the fifth section, Kuntres Acharon, is a deeper analysis of points mentioned in those sections.

35. The fact that the name Tanya was carefully chosen is further born out by the fact that, although the passage is a quote from the Talmud, most published texts of the Talmud quote other versions of the passage which do not begin with the word Tanya.

36. On an esoteric level, the Chassidim of the first generations, explained that this name facilitates the study of P’nimius HaTorah.

37. This refers to souls which are “roots which each sub-divide into 600,000

sparks.” In an ultimate sense, there are an unlimited number of Jewish souls as will be revealed in the Messianic age.

38. A Jew’s connection with Torah begins, not at the age when he is capable of studying Torah, but at birth. This is emphasized by the hanging of a Shir HaMaalos outside a child’s room.

39. The number six can be interpreted as an allusion to the sixth millennium, the era in which we will complete our service in the exile. In particular, it refers to our era, *Ikvisa d’Moshicha*.

40. The proof text quoted by Pirkei Avos, “And Esther told the king in the name of Mordechai,” is also significant. Esther refers to the Jewish people and Mordechai shares a connection to Moshe, our teacher. The potential of Moshe exists within every Jew. The expression, “the king,” refers to G-d, the King of the world. He also joins the Jews in exile, as it were, as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai states, “Wherever the Jews were exiled, the Divine Presence was exiled with them.”

41. Although they will not necessarily understand the Torah reading themselves, “the spiritual source of their souls sees.” Similarly, in regard to the Hakhel gatherings, the Torah commands us that young children should attend, “so that those who bring them will receive reward.”

42. Not only was G-d’s chariot revealed, G-d, the Master of the chariot, was also revealed to every Jew.

43. This brings to mind the Previous Rebbe’s statement that a meeting of two Jews should bring about benefit for another Jew. In this instance, the benefit is bringing the Jew into shul to study Torah, or hear the Torah reading of the Mincha service.

“MOSHIACH WILL BE RIGHT HERE!”

BY YOSSI SHACHAR
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

In an instant “I saw the light” regarding the discussion with my sister about whether the Rebbe is really Moshiach. As I was still pondering the thought, I heard the Rebbe say suddenly, “When all the souls have been invested in bodies, then Moshiach will be right here,” pointing with his finger to where he was sitting, smiling broadly. I interpreted this as if he was saying, “Nu, you get the hint?” At that moment, I was in complete shock.

R. Zalman from Tzfas, relates the following story:

A week after Purim 5740, my mother-in-law, who was living in Flatbush, passed away.

The following year, 5741, we came for a visit to Brooklyn to commemorate the first *yahrtzeit*. Since we were so close to the Rebbe’s court, we thought about spending Pesach in Crown Heights, and so we did. We stayed with my sister, who lived in the community. There were five of us – me, my wife, and our three children, a boy and two girls – the youngest child, a two-year old daughter.

After Pesach, we were scheduled to go in for yechidus with the Rebbe, along with many other guests

who had come for the holiday from out of town and overseas.

On the day of the yechidus, I had a conversation with my sister on the issue of whether the Rebbe is Moshiach. She tried to convince me that the Rebbe really is Moshiach. I readily agreed with her that the Rebbe is most definitely *fit* to be Moshiach. However, I added, if he really is, an announcement to that effect must come from the Rebbe himself, not merely on the basis of an opinion and an initiative of a few private individuals.

As I contemplated the matter, I thought to myself: If the Rebbe would suddenly proclaim to the whole world that he is Melech HaMoshiach, how would everyone

react to such a statement?

When we arrived at *Beis Chayeinu* 770, the place was filled with people. We approached the Rebbe’s secretary, R. Leibel Groner, to ask when our turn would be. He gave us a slip of paper and told us to write our names only, cautioning us not to add any additional requests, and so we did. After a brief wait, not as on previous occasions, Rabbi Groner informed us that it would soon be our turn to go in.

When we entered the Rebbe’s holy room, he asked us in which language we wished to speak, since we had been preceded by groups of both French and Hebrew speakers. I said that the Rebbe could speak in Yiddish, English, or Hebrew. Our older daughter, age five, and our four-year old son stood facing the Rebbe, peering at him over the table, and my wife stood next to me, holding our two-year old daughter. I stood and waited for the Rebbe to begin speaking.

The Rebbe asked us various personal questions, and then asked if the children had been registered in Tzivos Hashem (the registration was then at the height of all its *shturem*).

From time to time, Rabbi Groner would open the door to hurry us up. For our part, we adhered to the rules as agreed upon in advance, and we made no requests. We simply answered the questions that we were asked, and we responded “Amen” to



Afterwards, the Rebbe gave each of us a dollar for *shlichus mitzva*. When the Rebbe gave me the dollar, I summoned the courage to ask the Rebbe for a bracha for more children.

The Rebbe responded that this is a good bracha to request, since the Sages say that the son of Dovid will not come until all souls have been invested in bodies. Then the Rebbe began to explain the importance of asking for more children, which hastens the coming of Moshiach.

In an instant, "I saw the light" regarding the discussion with my sister about whether the Rebbe is really Moshiach. As I was still pondering the thought, I heard the Rebbe say suddenly, "**And when all the souls in bodies have run out, then Moshiach will be right here,**" pointing with his finger to where he was sitting, smiling broadly. I interpreted this as if he was saying, "Nu, you get the hint?"

At that moment, I was in complete shock.

As we left the room, I heard the Rebbe suddenly add, "You should merit that these children will be generals in Tzivos Hashem."

After that yechidus, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Rebbe really is Melech HaMoshiach.

the Rebbe's brachos.

One of the things that I wanted to request was a bracha for more children. However, since it had been agreed that I would not ask, I hoped that among all the Rebbe's brachos, there would also be a bracha for children in the form of "an arousal from Above."

The Rebbe spoke with us on matters of Yiddishkeit and the education of our children. Up until now, he had spoken entirely in Yiddish.

Then suddenly, the Rebbe turned to my son and older daughter and asked them in Ivrit, "*Hevantem mah sh'amarti?*" (Did you understand what I said?). They nodded yes.

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THE REBBE'S LARGE SEIFER TORAH

BY AVROHOM JACOBSON

*Starting in the year 5749 (1989), in most pictures showing the Rebbe holding a Seifer Torah, it's the Torah of the Tankistin. * In honor of Shavuos, we bring you the story of this special Torah, as we heard it from Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, director of Chabad's Mobile Mitzva Tanks in Eretz Yisroel.*

Rabbi Dovid Nachshon is not the type to get easily excited, but when I spoke to him about the seifer Torah that the Tankistin wrote, which the Rebbe used for a number of years, he was visibly moved.

It was late at night and Rabbi Nachshon had just concluded a busy day, but when he learned that I wanted to hear about the special Torah, he overcame his tiredness and began to talk. He recounted the sequence of events, the answers, the apprehension, and the great joy when the Rebbe accepted the Torah as a permanent guest in his home, and then in 770, near the Rebbe's little seifer Torah and the Seifer Torah of Moshiach.

It all began after the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a"h. Everybody knew they had to found as many mosdos as possible in her memory, to give the Rebbe nachas.

On Shabbos, during the farbrengen, the Rebbe referred to these

good intentions and asked that all projects that were done *l'ilui nishmas* the Rebbetzin be cleared by, and receive a stamp of approval from, rabbanim *morei horaa* (practicing rabbis), who would check to make sure that the opening of mosdos did not step on anybody's toes or duplicate existing mosdos. These projects were being done *l'ilui nishmas* the Rebbetzin, whose neshama is in the World of Truth, and over there they do not tolerate even a possibility of encroaching on somebody else's territory. The Rebbe even demanded that the rabbonim's approval be given in writing!

As director of the Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks and Tzivos Hashem in Eretz Yisroel, I consulted with friends about what project we should undertake. Together we decided on three projects: First, the purchase of another tank. The second project would be to publish reading material for the children of Tzivos Hashem.

(This ended up becoming the publication called *B'Machane Tzivos Hashem*.) And, thirdly, to write a seifer Torah which would be donated by the Tankistin and friends of the Tanks in Eretz Yisroel, which would be placed in the new tank.

Since most of the members of the Chabad beis din in Eretz Yisroel were in Crown Heights at the time, we convened the rabbanim the day after the farbrengen in order to get their approval for our suggestions. We wanted to begin putting the ideas into action before the end of the *Shiva*.

The meeting was called for the afternoon, and in the morning I spoke with the sofer, Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind, in general terms about the idea. He told me that the N'shei Chabad of Crown Heights and another chassid, had already asked him and agreed that he would write a Torah in memory of the Rebbetzin. He said it was difficult for him to believe that he would manage to finish three Sifrei Torah by the yahrtzeit.

At that time, his health wasn't good, to the point that sometimes weeks went by when he didn't do any writing. There was no way he could finish three Sifrei Torah within the year. Yet, he told me that if the rabbanim gave their approval, and the Rebbe gave his bracha, he hoped he could finish the third Torah in time for the yahrtzeit.

To tell you the truth, after talking





Avi Taub writing a letter in the Torah

with him, I was skeptical about whether we would manage to finish the writing in time, but I decided to carry on and to present the idea to the rabbanim anyway. In the afternoon, after receiving the approval of the rabbanim, and after getting their approval for all three ideas, I ran to R' Zirkind and told him to go ahead.

Since our plan was to place this Torah in the new tank, I asked him to make a small Torah. By Divine Providence, he had parchment ready for a small Torah that someone had ordered and then cancelled the order. He suggested that we use them for the new Torah. This was parchment made from a cow's uterus, which is very thin and suitable for small Sifrei Torah, but also very expensive. I told him that the price didn't scare me, especially when this was something that would give the Rebbe nachas, and we don't make monetary calculations when it comes to these things.

The next day, on Monday, a day before the end of the *Shiva*, we began the writing of the seifer Torah. On the morning of that day, two Sifrei Torah were begun, and we began writing in the afternoon, in the Rebbe's house.

As I said, N'shei Chabad and another chassid had preceded me. Due to the sofer's poor health, each of them pressured him to finish their Torah first. It reached a point where rabbanim were consulted, and this led to a sharp reaction from the Rebbe, who warned from the very start that projects in the Rebbetzin's memory should not be done at the expense of ahavas Yisroel and the like. The Rebbe said that of those two, the writing of a Torah *l'ilui nishmas* the Rebbetzin belonged to N'shei Chabad, and they could use the Rebbetzin's name on this Torah.

The sofer finished N'shei's Torah on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5749. Another two and a half months remained, and in a conversation that I had with the sofer at that time, he told me there was no way he could complete an entire Torah in that amount of time. He said that due to the Rebbe's sharp remark about the earlier Sifrei Torah, he really

wanted to get an answer and bracha to write a third Torah.

'If the Rebbe gives his bracha, there could be a miracle and I could finish writing by 22 Shvat,' he said, in a voice more hopeful than confident.

I sat down immediately to write a letter to the Rebbe in which I said that I had heard about the Rebbe's reaction to the two earlier Sifrei Torah, and that I hoped that my plan would be viewed favorably. I asked for a bracha for the sofer, that he should feel well and be able to complete the Torah by 22 Shvat.

Within a short time, I was told that the Rebbe said: I will mention it at the tziyun.

Encouraged by the Rebbe's answer, I went back to the sofer and asked him to do his best to finish the writing by 22 Shvat. He said he would try, letting me know that if he actually finished it by then it would be a miracle.

The unbelievable happened and the writing went quickly. About every two weeks, the sofer finished one book of the Torah. We quickly reported to the Rebbe and received many answers and encouragement.

A week before 22 Shvat it was clear that the sofer would finish the Torah on time. We ordered two mantles for the Torah and a beautiful crown made of silver and gold. The wooden handles were also silver-plated, to increase the hiddur mitzva in the Torah that was written to give the Rebbe nachas.

That year, 5749, the 22nd of Shvat fell out on Shabbos, and we decided that the Hachnasas Seifer Torah would take place in 770 on Thursday, the night of the 21st of Shvat. We told the Rebbe about this and ordered tickets for the flight. My wife, Bluma, joined me, as well as my dear friend and colleague, Avi Taub, the one responsible for the tanks Shemarya Harel, and the Tankist Yosef Abelsky.

That day, after davening Shacharis with the Rebbe in his



R' Avrohom Genin dancing with the Torah



The Tankistin and Friends of the Tanks sitting and farbrenging after the Hachnasas Seifer Torah

house, the Rebbe turned around to the gabbai as though waiting for him to make an announcement. Since it was Thursday, the day the Rebbe went to the Ohel, and there was no set time for Mincha, the gabbai announced, as was usual, that Mincha would take place “when they would be ready.” But the Rebbe continued to look at him, waiting for an announcement. The gabbai didn’t know what he should say next until the Rebbe told him to announce the Hachnasas Seifer Torah that would take place at night. Only after he made this announcement, did the Rebbe go up to his room on the second floor.

At that moment, we were on the plane to New York. It was only when we arrived in Crown Heights that we heard what had happened at Shacharis. We were thrilled about the attention the Rebbe seemed to be giving our Torah.

Later on, the sofer told me that on that day, after Shacharis when the announcement was made about the Hachnasas Seifer Torah, the Rebbe sent him his t’fillin and mezuzos to be checked. He said that there were other things, which he couldn’t tell me, that were connected with the seifer Torah.

The simcha began that evening in 770. The Torah was brought into the Rebbe’s beis midrash with song and dance. We honored the T’mimim, the Tankistin, and friends of the Tanks, led by Avi Taub, and Yaakov Tilson, with hakafos. The simcha was enormous and it lasted long after the hakafos ended. It was simcha that was reminiscent of those special moments on Simchas Torah, and till this day they are precious memories for me.

As is customary with every new seifer Torah that is brought into 770 – that it is read from on the following Shabbos – our Torah was placed in the aron kodesh to be read from on Shabbos. As mentioned earlier, 22 Shvat came out on Shabbos that year, and since the Rebbe was going to lead the davening of Shacharis, we were honored by the

Rebbe carrying the Torah from the aron to the bima even before the first reading.

The gabbaim honored me with opening the aron, and so I presented the Rebbe with the seifer Torah. It was one of the most thrilling moments of my life when I stood there, near the aron kodesh, waiting for the Rebbe to finish the *Ata Horeisa*, thus giving the signal for the aron to be opened. I stood there from the beginning of the t’filla, and felt as I had never felt in my life. As though in a dream, I heard the Rebbe finish the verse, *Hashem yivorech es amo b’shalom*. I moved the paroches, opened the doors of the aron kodesh, and nervously removed the new seifer Torah.

“After a few moments, which seemed like an eternity to me, the Rebbe finished saying *Brich Shmei* and with trembling hands I held the Torah out to the Rebbe.

“The Rebbe took it with both hands. I heard the Rebbe say *Shma Yisroel* and *Echad Elokeinu*, with thousands repeating after him. Then, after the Rebbe finished saying, *Gadlu l’Hashem iti u’n’romema shmo yachdav*, the Rebbe thrust the Torah upwards. I was afraid the crown would fly off from the forceful motion. The Rebbe then made his way to the table where the Torah is read.

“That Shabbos was Parshas Yisro, and we had the merit of the Ten Commandments being read in 770 from our seifer Torah.

The biggest surprise awaited us after the kria. Generally, after saying the brachos of the Haftora, the Rebbe returned to his place and said *Y’kum Purkan* and the other prayers before Musaf, but this time was different. The Rebbe remained at the bima and waited until the end of *Av HaRachamim*, and then took the Torah from the one who raised it up and began walking with it towards the aron kodesh. And the Rebbe danced with the Torah, just like on Simchas Torah.

“The crowd began singing *Sisu V’simchu B’Simchas Torah* and the Rebbe began waving the Torah in all directions in



R’ Yitzchok Springer dancing with the Torah

great joy, which made the crowd sing even louder. We all went wild over the special regard the Rebbe had for this Torah.

“In the meantime, I quickly went over to the aron kodesh in order to take the seifer Torah from the Rebbe, but I had to wait a few minutes because after the Rebbe came close to his place he began to dance in place and to wave the Torah in all directions. The singing became even more lively.

“Then the Rebbe gave me the seifer Torah so it could be put back in the aron, giving me a warm, affectionate look.

“That Shabbos, the Rebbe dedicated a significant part of the farbrengen to a sicha about the inyan of a Hachnasas Seifer Torah. This was later published as a booklet edited by the Rebbe.

“After seeing how precious this Torah was to the Rebbe, I thought that perhaps the Rebbe would be happier to have the Torah remain in 770. I wrote this to the Rebbe, saying that our original plan was to take the Torah to Eretz Yisroel and put it in the new tank that we had bought. At the end of the letter, I said that if the Rebbe wanted something different to be done, we’d be happy to fulfill the Rebbe’s wishes.

“I received an answer shortly thereafter, which said that a Torah should not be taken from place to place. I was very surprised by this answer since there had been instances in which the Rebbe had sent sifrei Torah to Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Marlow, to whom I told the Rebbe’s answer, said that according to halacha there was no problem in taking a seifer Torah to Eretz Yisroel. We came to the conclusion that the Rebbe wanted the Torah to remain with him.

“At the end of that week, I wrote another letter to the Rebbe in which I informed the Rebbe of our decision to leave the Torah with the Rebbe. A few



The crowd rejoicing. As is customary, all the sifrei Torah were removed from the aron, including the Seifer Torah of Moshiach.

minutes after my sending in the note, Rabbi Leibel Groner came down and told me that the Rebbe read the note with great satisfaction and said: The seifer Torah remains here.

“On Sunday morning, Rosh Chodesh Adar, in the minyan at the Rebbe’s house, I was honored with *hagba*, and after I put the seifer Torah back in the aron kodesh, the Rebbe went up to the second floor to change his Rashi t’fillin for Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin, passing me as he went.

“The Rebbe stopped for a moment and said, ‘*yashar ko’ach*’ with his face alight, and continued on. Now I was certain that we did the right thing in leaving the Torah with the Rebbe.

“For a long period our seifer Torah was read from in the Rebbe’s house, and when the Rebbe began davening in 770, they moved the Torah there and put it in the aron kodesh next to the Rebbe’s little seifer Torah and the Seifer Torah of Moshiach. From then on, whenever the Rebbe lead the services and needed to carry a seifer Torah, they would take out the Torah of the Tankistin.

* * *

To conclude, I’ll tell you an interesting story that happened on 22 Shvat 5750, one year after the Torah was read from for the first time. 22 Shvat in 5750 also fell out on a Shabbos, and the Rebbe lead the davening. That Shabbos the Rebbe farbrenged, and as was usual in such cases, Mincha was held on the farbrengen platform, with the Rebbe’s shtender and the reader’s table placed on that platform.

That Mincha, the gabbaim honored me with *p’sicha* and I took the Tankistin’s Torah from the aron kodesh to bring it to the farbrengen platform. It was hard for me to make my way through hundreds of chassidim who crowded around the bima, when I suddenly noticed the Rebbe leaving his place near the shtender and coming towards me.

I moved as quickly as I could, and when I got to the steps that led to the platform, the Rebbe was waiting for me. I stood below and the Rebbe stood above me, and then the Rebbe held out his hands towards me and took the Torah from my outstretched hands.

This sight is engraved in my mind till this day.

THE GAON AND KABBALIST: RABBI MORDECHAI ELIYAHU SHLITA

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER HA'LEVI WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



PART 3

FORTUNATE IS OUR GENERATION

“His head is paz [finest gold],¹ ‘kvutzosav taltalim’ [his locks (of hair) are wavy],² black as a raven’ – from even the smallest details³ of Torah he extracts mounds upon mounds of halachos. ‘Black as a raven – [this refers to him who studies Torah in the *beis midrash* early in the morning and late at night’ (*Eirubin* 21b). ‘His head is paz’ – it is the **eighty-seventh** year of the **head** of the Jewish people, the beauty and splendor of the generation, the *gaon* and holy one as an angle of the L-rd of Hosts. ‘Kvutzosav taltalim’ – his whole life [embodies] mounds upon mounds of holy practices.

“His Torah, his tremendous brilliance, and his exalted *s’farim* are filled with mounds and mounds of Torah and pure faith. ‘Kvutzosav’ – his mighty influence stretches from one end of the world to the other.” ‘Black as a raven’ – he sacrifices himself for Torah. He lives in tremendous modesty and abstinence, devoting himself by day and by night – *the night shall shine like the day* – to making the Torah great and glorious. Fortunate is

our generation, in which such a tzaddik and holy person resides. (From introduction to Torah thought sent by Rabbi Eliyahu for inclusion in the book *Kevod Chachamim, Ateress Paz*, 5749 / 1989.)

**“How many baalei
t’shuva? How many
people are [now]
keeping mitzvahs? How
many Jews who strayed
have returned? How
much darkness has the
Rebbe shlita
illuminated with the
light of his wisdom and
understanding?”**

YOU WILL LIGHT THE HOLY MENORAH

“How many *baalei t’shuva*? How many people are [now] keeping mitzvahs? How many Jews who

strayed have returned? How much darkness has the Rebbe *shlita* illuminated with the light of his wisdom and understanding? Wherever there is darkness in the world, his shluchim are there illuminating the heart of the Jewish people . . . I am certain that when our righteous Moshiach will come, he will rule that the Menorah [in the Holy Temple] may be kindled by a *zar*,⁴ and he will say to the Rebbe *shlita*: “It was you who brought light into the hearts of the Jewish people. It was you who brought them the holy and pure warmth. It was you who brought the hearts of the children back to their Father in Heaven. It is you who will kindle the holy Menorah! (Menorah lighting ceremony at the *Kosel*,⁵ Chanukah 5750 / 1989.)

GIANT OF THE GENERATION

“As one who met with the Rebbe a number of times, and as one who is connected to him in many ways, I can tell you that there is no *rav* in this generation who is as great as him in all areas of Torah. On the basic level [of Torah interpretation], no secret escapes him. When it comes to the sea of Talmud, he navigates its waters as though he learnt the subject matter

this very moment. It is the same with the allegorical, esoteric, and Kabbalistic levels [of Torah interpretation] – he is as familiar with the mystical dimension as he is with the revealed dimension. He is definitely the Torah giant of the generation – there is no one like him. But most important is his humility, the light that he imbues in the Jewish people, the holiness that he instills in them. There is no one like him. In any dark corner of the world, if you suddenly notice a point of light – “*A mitzva is a candle, and Torah is light*” – it comes from the Rebbe, by means of his shluchim Fortunate are you who take refuge in his shadow, fortunate are you who walk in his light. (Vocational School alumni gathering, Kfar Chabad, 11 Shvat, 5750 February 6, 1990.)

“THE MOUTH OF THE TZADDIK UTTERS WISDOM, AND HIS TONGUE SPEAKS JUSTICE”

“We have gathered here in honor of the birthday of the Sage of the Secrets, *gaon* of the generation, the bastion and tower, the ‘tzaddik [who] is the foundation of the world,’ his honor and holiness, the *Admur shlita*, upon his entering his ninetieth year, for length of days and good years. There are no better verses to describe the uniqueness of this day than those recited by the sweet singer of Israel, King David, in *perek 37* of T’hillim:

“*The mouth of the tzaddik utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The Torah of his G-d is in his heart; his footsteps will not falter.*’ ‘Pi’ [the mouth] has the numerical value of 90, and tzaddik has the numerical value of 90. ‘Utters wisdom’ – who is the greatest speaker of wisdom? It is the Rebbe, whose mind is immersed in finding ways to disseminate Torah everywhere. ‘His tongue speaks wisdom’ – when one studies the *sichos* in the original, as they were spoken by the

Rebbe, one sees how they are all words of justice, ‘*founded on sockets of finest gold.*’ (11 Nissan celebration, Kfar Chabad, 5751 / March 6, 1991.)

THE TORAH OF HIS G-D IS WITHIN HIM

“Moreover, ‘*The Torah of G-d is within him*’- i.e., the Torah is engraved upon his heart. From the Torah’s basic meaning to its allegorical meaning to its esoteric meaning; from the revealed dimension to the mystical dimension; from the Talmud to the Codes to halachic responsa. Immense knowledge and incredible depth in all



Rabbi Eliyahu during a visit to Chabad institutions in France

areas of Torah. ‘*His footsteps will not falter*’ – he gazes and sees in the distance, i.e., he foresees many events before they come to pass, and his [gaze] does not falter; as Rashi explains, ‘his footsteps do not slip.’⁶

“Indeed, the Rebbe foresaw the transformations now taking place in the Soviet bloc, the wonders

transpiring this year, and many other events. All his predictions materialize exactly as he describes, and all his prophecies come to pass precisely as he foresees them. Gentlemen, anyone who beholds the actions and activities of the Rebbe proclaims: ‘This is a Rebbe! May there be many like him among the Jewish people!’”

CONCERN FOR EVERY JEW

“The Rebbe never sees the crudeness of another Jew. If he sees Jews who are lacking in Torah, he embraces them, draws them close, and gives them the spirit of Torah study. Gentleman, the greatness of the *Admur*, as mentioned, extends to every area of Torah. Nevertheless, he tends to the needs of people of small stature, bringing closer those who are distant Fortunate is the generation that has this tzaddik in its midst.”

THE THIRD MEETING: 5752

Sunday night, 6 Mar-Cheshvan, 5752 (October 14, 1991), Rabbi Eliyahu visited the Rebbe again in the latter’s holy room. The *gaon*’s entourage was present during his conversation with the Rebbe, and the transcript of the conversation was printed as a pamphlet, and then later, as part of *Seifer HaSichos 5752*. They discussed the following issues:

The Divine Presence abides in every gathering ten Jews, even if they are not studying Torah. * The Jewish people transcend the Torah. * The virtues of a Jew’s physical body. * The Rambam’s ruling concerning the promises of material abundance, which is essential for the proper fulfillment of Torah and mitzvahs. * The power of the rabbinical court to temporarily suspend a mitzva in the Torah. * Erasure of a section of Torah for the purpose of making a woman⁷ permissible to her husband. * “Before Whom are you purified?” – i.e., higher than the Tetragrammaton.⁸ * G-d’s sovereignty, through the Jewish people. The Chabad custom of

reciting *L'sheim Yichud* only once a day (before the *Baruch Sh'Amar* prayer). * Diverting one's attention from learning – in places where Torah study is forbidden. Covering the hair.⁹ * Is the "half *shiur*," which the Torah forbids, applicable only to food or to all things? * The reason the *Shtei HaLechem* offering presented on Shavuot had to be of leaven. * How should a Jew from Israel conduct himself with regard to the recitation of "*v'sein tal u'matar*," when he is traveling abroad? * The daily Priestly Blessing according to Sephardic custom.

Regarding the imminent Redemption: * "In the future, Moshe and Aharon will be with them."¹⁰ * In the future Torah law will follow the rulings of the House of Shammai. * The obligation to offer sacrifices in the future era for sins committed during the time of exile. * Will someone who converted to Judaism during the time of exile be required to bring a sacrifice when the Holy Temple will be rebuilt? * The need for halachic authorities to rule that Moshiach must come immediately. * The Children of Israel say, "Return us to You, O G-d," whereas G-d says, "[First], you return to me"; the law

must "follow the majority [opinion]." * At one point in the conversation the Rebbe said, **"The Redemption is standing at the ledge, by the door, and is waiting for each and every Jew to open the door and pull the Redemption into the room."**

Before [the group left], the Rebbe said, "May it be [G-d's] will that the Redemption should come immediately, and then I will visit Your Honor in your holy chamber in the Holy Land." Rabbi Eliyahu responded enthusiastically: "Welcome! With great joy I will say, "Welcome, he who comes in the Name of G-d!" The Rebbe then escorted Rabbi Eliyahu to the car awaiting him, at the same time spurring the onlookers, who were singing, "*Ki b'simcha seitzei'u*."

At a Kollel Chabad dinner that took place in New York later that week Rabbi Eliyahu said the following:

HOLY ANGEL OF G-D

"What amazed me and excited me so much was the following: my visit to the Rebbe did not take place on a regular weekday, but on Sunday, after the Rebbe had stood on his holy feet from morning till evening without pause, without a moment to relax, welcoming the thousands of people [who came to see him]. Under natural circumstances, he should have exhibited some signs of fatigue; but in actuality, I was deeply impressed by his clear-headedness and lucidity, which was so extraordinary it cannot be explained within the context of the laws of nature."

"The moment I mentioned any subject in Torah, the

Rebbe commented and spoke about it **as though he had finished studying this particular tractate or subject literally this very moment. And it was all so bright and clear to him.** Quite literally, it is unbelievable how a human being is capable of this. I said [to myself], 'He is not a human being, but a holy angel of G-d.'

STEERING THE CONVERSATION

"It seems to me that there were two main things that stuck out in the Rebbe's words: Love for one's fellow Jew, and concern for the Jewish nation as a whole. It is really amazing how with every subject that we spoke about, the Rebbe steered the conversation in such a manner that it reflected the virtues and praises of the Jewish people . . . The entire Jewish People, literally, is always under his watch, unlike other leaders who have only their own following under their watch."

I NEVER SAW SUCH GREATNESS

"I have merited to know many of the generation's Torah leaders, and I am awed by the greatness of some of them. But the Rebbe is something else entirely. I have never seen such greatness in all parts of Torah – on the basic, allegorical, expository, and esoteric levels simultaneously. After meeting the Rebbe *shlita*, I said to myself, 'He is not a human being, but an angel of G-d.' Surly I need not elaborate on the Rebbe's activities at disseminating Judaism throughout the entire world; it is common knowledge. I already related the story that occurred . . . how the Rebbe *shlita* saw with Divine inspiration that a young couple would come to me, and he sent the person who wanted to marry the woman to consult with me, and in the merit of his Divine inspiration a great disaster was averted. (All of the above was spoken at the Kollel Chabad dinner.)



Rabbi Eliyahu with the Baba Sali

THE G-DLY MAN

“Only the comprehensive soul of the *tzaddik* of the generation is capable of initiating projects that unite the Jewish people. The Rebbe *shlita* is “the G-dly man.”¹¹ He has no desires of his own, no personal matters – nothing – not even eating, drinking, and sleeping. Rather, his soul yearns only to sanctify G-d’s Name, and to unite the Jewish people with love. One who reflects on the Rebbe’s holy ways will quickly realize that such a person cannot possibly be subject to the laws of nature – rather, the merit of the Jewish people elevates him to the level of a “G-dly man.” His great light shines from one end of the world to the other, and in his merit the entire world becomes refined, and ready for the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days. (Siyum HaRambam, Kislev, 5752 / Nov-Dec, 1991.)

placed in the midst of this generation Fortunate are we in meriting to have in our generation a luminous, encouraging, holy, devout, and angelic *tzaddik* of the generation such as the Rebbe *shlita*. I will reiterate what I already stated: he is not of the sons of man, but a unique soul, a holy soul, which has come to bring deliverance to the Jewish people.

“Gentlemen, the Rebbe’s unmatched love for every Jew is well



Rabbi Eliyahu shaking hands with the Rebbe

PRAYING FOR THE NASI OF THE GENERATION

After the occurrence of Chaf-Zayin Adar I, 5752 (March 2, 1992), the honorable *gaon* took every opportunity to urge people to pray for the Rebbe. At the 11 Nissan celebration that year, Rabbi Eliyahu said the following: “The *Admur shlita* is the most unique person of the generation. Who knows what would have become of us without this *Admur*. He is a holy soul, an exceptional soul, which G-d has

known. How much he has prayed on behalf of the Jewish nation as a whole! How much he has prayed on behalf of individual Jews! Now, we must pray for his recovery and well-being! I, furthermore, suggest that very one of us – even those who are not presently here – take upon himself to enhance his observance of one of the [ten] mitzvahs that the Rebbe *shlita* has promulgated and popularized.

“Gentlemen, the Rebbe inspires us

with the coming of Moshiach, and on the need to prepare for his arrival. Master of the universe! The Jewish People anticipates the Redemption. We have waited so long We want to see Moshiach’s countenance immediately! We have experienced suffering. [We have recently been through] the ‘birth pangs’ of Moshiach. Torah we have. Chassidus we have. Master of the universe! Let the Rebbe’s *shlita*’s 248 limbs and 365 sinews be completely healed.

May it be Your will that he should be healthy, and may it be your will that we should all merit to behold our righteous Moshiach!”

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NOTES:

1 In the Hebrew, the number eighty-seven is represented by the letters Pey and Zayin, which, together, spell the word “paz.”

2 This is the basic meaning. However, “*taltalim*” is etymologically related to the “*tel*, *telim* meaning “mound, mounds,” and “*kvutzosav*” is related to “*katzeh*,” meaning “end.”

3 I.e., the “ends.”

4 I.e., a non-Kohen.

5 I.e., Western Wall.

6 I.e., he does not err.

7 I.e., an accused sotah.

8 I.e., Y-H-V-H, G-d’s ineffable Name.

9 I.e., in reference to a married woman.

10 Moshe and Aharon will be present to witness the Redemption.

11 Paraphrasing . . .



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• *Excitement*

SOME OF THIS YEAR'S SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS:

- Chof-Bais Shvat International Convention in Crown Heights
- Chodesh Kislev class project: Branches of the Chassidic Menorah
 - "Let Us Make Man" annual production
 - Mother-Daughter Shabbaton/Alumni Reunion
- Yud Shvat Shabbaton in Crown Heights
- "Moshiaich Peace" campaign
- Rosh Hashana in Postville, IA

• *Chassidish is "In"*

RUCHINIUS HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR:

- Entire school memorizing Perek 49 of Tanya in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev and Perek 17 in honor of Yud Shvat
 - "Leap to Learn" Thursday morning learning
 - Hey Teves Learnathon
- "Drive in Pride" daily learning of Chitas on bus at end of school day
- Bi-weekly farbrengens on Motzei Shabbos
 - Weekly mitvzoim
- Students' preparation of kuntreisim for extra learning before major Chassidische Yomim Tovim
- Whole day celebrations of major Chassidische Yomim Tovim
- Special out-of-town guest speakers
 - Shabbos M'vorchim farbrengens
 - Daily chavrusa learning in preparation for Davening
 - Student-initiated lunchtime class in Dvar Malchus

Written Rabbinic Poem endorsing Bnos Rabbeinu signed by Rabbi A. Ovsha, Rabbi A.Y. Schwetlitz & Rabbi Y. Raitport (Bais Din of Crown Heights) and Rabbi Y. Hendel (Montreal, Canada)



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AN END TO CONFUSION

*Many Lubavitchers have precious memories of private audiences they had with the Rebbe. * Rabbi Menachem Meir Blau had many such private audiences, and he shares some of his stories with us.*

A REDHEAD AND A COHEN

I was very mischievous as a child and my mother aⁿh had a hard time with me. Once, when my father had a yechidus with the Rebbe, my mother asked my father to ask the Rebbe for his advice on how to handle me. My father did so, telling the Rebbe that my mother wasn't happy with my behavior.

The Rebbe smiled and said, "Nu, he's a redhead and a Kohen..."

AN END TO CONFUSION

In 5718 (1958), a year before my bar mitzva, my father had a yechidus. I asked him to take me along since I had pain and inflammation in my right ear every winter. My father agreed to take me, and in the middle of the yechidus he told the Rebbe about my problem. He added that we had gone to a top ear doctor a few weeks before and his opinion was that I had a deviated septum and this was the source of the problem. The doctor concluded that when I grew older, either the problem would disappear or I would need an operation to fix the bone.

When my father mentioned an

operation, the Rebbe made a dismissive motion with his hand, indicating that an operation was out of the question. Then the Rebbe said: May Hashem help and bring to an end all the *bilbulim* (that which confuses you).

From then on, with just one exception, I didn't suffer from the problem anymore.

BAR MITZVA IN THE LUNCHROOM

In Adar 5719 (1959), I had a yechidus along with my father, before my bar mitzva. In those days bar mitzvas weren't celebrated as they are today. The Rebbe asked where my bar mitzva celebration would take place, and my father said he was making a Kiddush in his shul on Shabbos (my father was rav of a shul in East New York).

The Rebbe said: Aside from that, you should celebrate in yeshiva too, either where the bachurim learn or where they eat.

Then the Rebbe said: Surely he will receive an aliya to the Torah here in 770!



My father hadn't originally planned on my having an aliya in 770, but he immediately changed his mind and said yes.

I was learning in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim on Bedford Ave at that time, in a rough neighborhood, and it was hard to get people to come there in the evening. Instead, we made the bar mitzva celebration in the boys' lunchroom on 676 Eastern Parkway.

Years later, when my children became bar mitzva, I remembered the Rebbe's horaa and made sure to make the celebrations in the Oholei Torah lunchroom.

THE MOST DIFFICULT PATH IS YOUR PATH

The way it used to be was that bachurim who reached the age of bar mitzva would have a yechidus every year for their birthday. At one of these yechidusin, I asked the Rebbe: What is my primary role in life? (Each person has a particular mission for which reason his neshama descended to this world.)

The Rebbe answered: It's hard to know for oneself; all the more so for someone else. The general rule is that which is hardest for someone is his main task in life.

The Rebbe added: It doesn't have to be one thing; it could be a number of things.

NOT TO SLEEP IN THE DAYTIME

At one of these yechidusin, I wrote out my daily learning schedule in detail and asked whether the Rebbe approved. The Rebbe said it was fine but I had to add to it by learning practical halachos every day in the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* or in *Derech HaChayim* and *Nesiv HaChayim* (published in the siddur *Torah Ohr*).

I had written that I slept for some amount of time during the day. The Rebbe said: Sleeping during the day

isn't good, even for someone older, and all the more so for a bachur. If it happens that you don't sleep all night, like on Simchas Torah or other special occasions, you can rest for half an hour or an hour, so you can daven.

HOW TO CHOOSE A MASHPIA

At one of the yechidusin, regarding one of my questions, the Rebbe said I should ask my mashpia. I was learning in 770 at the time, and there were a number of mashpiim. I asked the Rebbe which mashpia would give me

The Rebbe made a dismissive motion with his hand, indicating that an operation was out of the question. Then the Rebbe said: May Hashem help and bring to an end all the confusion.

the proper answers. The Rebbe said: Speak to whichever mashpia you feel drawn to.

HOW TO REST FROM LIMUD IYUNI

I once asked the Rebbe in a yechidus how to divide my time between learning in depth and learning to cover ground. The Rebbe said: You have to learn in depth, and when you get tired of learning in depth then it's time to rest by learning to cover ground.

NIGLEH OR CHASSIDUS?

At a yechidus for my twentieth birthday, I asked the Rebbe: Some people are meant to concentrate on learning nigleh, while others are meant to concentrate on learning chassidus. What should I do?

The Rebbe answered: There is no such thing today. Today, everybody has to learn both. The difference is only in what takes priority.

The Rebbe added: You write that you are 20 years old already and you still don't know what takes priority? If you don't know, ask your mashpia.

FITTING THE WORLD TO THE DAVENING

On another occasion, I asked the Rebbe: We daven every day and say the same thing; I find it hard to think of the meaning of the words again and again.

The Rebbe said: The words are the same but the meaning is different. Each day we see different things in the world, and the kavana while davening must incorporate everything we see in the world with what it says in the davening. If it fits, fine. If it doesn't fit, then think about it until it fits.

WHAT TO THINK

When I asked the Rebbe what sort of maamarei chassidus to think about before davening, the Rebbe said: Whatever your heart desires.

BIRTHDAY ON EREV SHABBOS

One year, when my birthday fell out on a Friday, the Rebbe told me in yechidus to get an aliya and to increase in Torah and tz'daka. These were the usual horaos that were given every year, but that year, the Rebbe added: Since your birthday comes out on Friday, review the sidra Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum on Erev Shabbos and don't leave it for Shabbos.

I later heard that others received the same instruction when their

birthday fell out on Friday, yet this hasn't been included in the birthday customs!

ADD A NAME

When I got engaged with the Rebbe's *haskama* and *bracha*, I wrote that my name is the same as my father-in-law's (Meir). The Rebbe said: Add a name. And the Rebbe mentioned the well-known *responsa* of the Tzemach Tzedek, and added, "and it should be for length of days and good years."

I added the name Menachem to my name. Shortly thereafter I had a *yechidus* for my birthday and I signed my name, Menachem Meir. The Rebbe asked me in the *yechidus*: Your name is Menachem? I answered that the Rebbe had told me to add a name and I had added the name Menachem. The Rebbe said: *a glaiacha zach* (a good thing)!

LIGHT

When my *kalla* and I had *yechidus* before our wedding, the Rebbe said: Finish the preparations for the wedding in a Yiddishe way and in a *chassidishe* way.

The Rebbe added: When you illuminate your surroundings it will be light for you.

SHLICHUS IN NEW YORK

Two years after the wedding, we had a suggestion for *shlichus*. We wrote to the Rebbe about it and about what we were doing at the time (I worked in Hadar HaTorah and my wife worked in the Breuers school). The Rebbe answered: If so, why not stand by their word and commitment to all of the above, etc. etc.

From this, we understood that our *shlichus* is to spread the wellsprings in New York.

A MASHPIA MUST BE ABOVE

At that same time (I don't remember if it was before or after the previous exchange) we got another

shlichus offer, here in Crown Heights, at Machon Chana. The school was looking for a couple to live in the dormitory as house parents.

We had a *yechidus* and I asked the Rebbe whether we should accept the job. The Rebbe asked us whether we would have privacy there, because a married couple needs privacy. My wife answered that the *hanhala* told her we would have our own rooms within the dorm. The Rebbe seemed satisfied with that.

Then the Rebbe asked: What do they have in mind – are they looking for someone to run the maintenance of the building or for a *mashpia* for the girls? We said they were looking for a *mashpia* for the girls.

The Rebbe said: If so, then it would be better not to live there because when a *mashpia* lives with his *mushpaim*, it diminishes his influence, because he becomes too close with the *mushpaim*. A *mashpia* needs to be a bit above his *mushpaim*.

We ended up turning down the offer; the Gansburgs took the position and are enormously successful in it. May they experience continued success for many more years to come.

A SURPRISING ANSWER AFTER SHAVUOS

Twenty years ago, during *S'fira*, I went for a routine checkup with the family doctor. He found a growth and wasn't certain if it was benign. He sent me to another doctor, who examined me and sounded just as worried as my family doctor. He arranged a series of tests for me and decided that I needed to be operated on to remove the growth because it was highly likely that it was malignant, *ch"v*.

I went to another top doctor to hear his opinion and he agreed with the other doctor. This happened a few weeks before *Shavuos*. I wrote to the Rebbe and asked him what I should do. I didn't get a response.

A few days after *Shavuos* I got an answer: After the Giving of our Torah and our receiving it, ask the doctor again.

I went back to the first top doctor and said: Since some weeks have gone by since the initial exam, I would like you to do the tests over again. Maybe there was a mistake or maybe the growth shrank, and there is no need to do an operation. After insisting on this, the doctor agreed to do more tests.

After all the tests were done, he said that nothing had changed and I needed an operation. I wrote to the Rebbe again and said: I went back to the doctor. He did all the tests again and said nothing changed...

Since the Rebbe didn't tell me to go ahead with an operation, just to ask the doctor again, I did so, and I won't do the operation unless the Rebbe tells me to do so. I received no reply and I didn't do the operation nor treat it in any way.

I ASKED FOR WEALTH

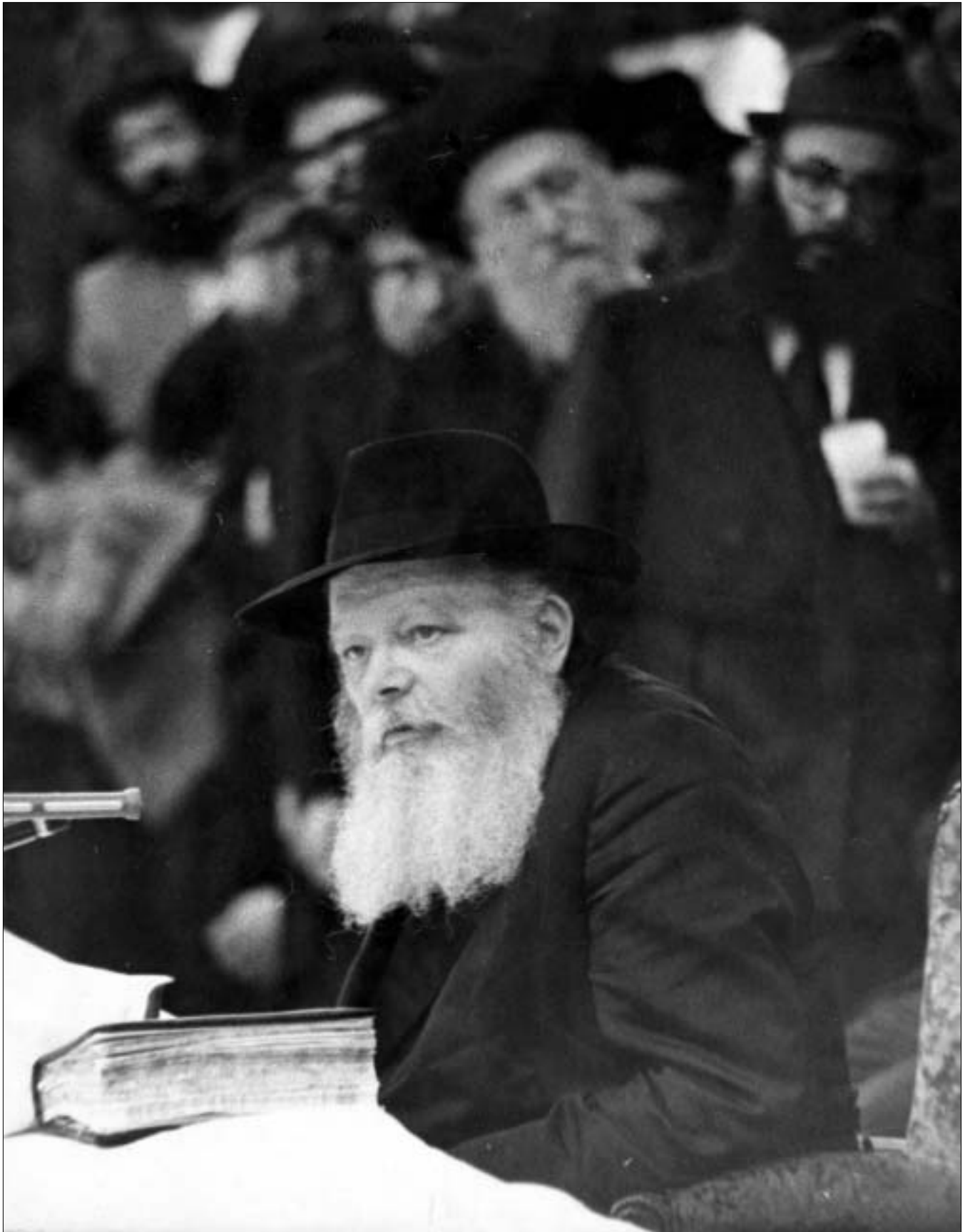
I once wrote to the Rebbe (long after our wedding) that I was asking for a *bracha* for wealth to be used for spreading *Yiddishkeit* and the wellsprings. The Rebbe wrote his answer in his own handwriting on my letter. Between the words "to be used" and "spreading *Yiddishkeit*," the Rebbe wrote "mainly."

CROWN HEIGHTS NEWS-LINE

On Purim 5751, I went by the Rebbe for dollars and said it was three years since I had started the Crown Heights News-Line, and I asked for a *bracha* for financial success so I could continue to run it without limitations.

The Rebbe answered: Amen! And added: The main thing is that the wellsprings should be spread outward, and this will bring the coming of *Moshiach*.

And the Rebbe gave me an additional dollar.



THE CHASSID WHO INSPIRED MOSHIACH & SCIENCE RESEARCH

BY PROF. SHIMON SILMAN, RYAL INSTITUTE AND TOURO COLLEGE

Part 3 of 3

A CONTINUING INSPIRATION

When the Previous Rebbe visited Israel in 1929, he visited the graves of several great tzaddikim. This, in fact, was the purpose of his visit. When he came to the grave of the Rambam, he stayed an unusually long time. Afterwards he commented on the verse: “And the living shall take to heart,” explaining it to mean that one should live his life in such a way that even afterwards he be a *Chai* – one who lives.

In this section we will look at some of the ways in which Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib's life continues to be an inspiration for Jews in general and for Jewish scientists in particular.

Over the years, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach has said many *sichos* and *maamarim* (Chassidic discourses) on the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib. One year, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach applied the verse “*echod b'echad yigoshu...*” – “one to one they approach...” – (Iyov 41:8) to the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib on the 13th of Iyar (the numerical value of the word *echod* is 13). The verse is usually invoked to compare the *yahrtzeit* of the Tzemach Tzedek (13 Nisan) to the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe Maharash (13 Tishrei).

In recent years, however, Melech HaMoshiach put special emphasis on the *yahrtzeit* by publishing *maamarim* for the occasion under the title “*Kuntres Yud Gimmel Iyar*” (the booklet for the 13th of Iyar), a distinction

reserved for the most special days on the Chabad calendar.

At the Shabbos farbrengen on 13 Iyar, 5751 (1991), Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib's 39th *yahrtzeit*, Melech HaMoshiach, said the famous “Gola to Geula” *sicha* in which he defined Geula as the transformation of Galus (exile), a transformation which is accomplished by “adding the Alef” to Gola. In the same *sicha* he discusses the deeper meaning of the name “Yisroel Aryeh Leib” and the instruction that it holds for every Jew:

The name Yisroel has two opposite meanings: 1) A Kabbalistic meaning interprets the Hebrew letters of Yisroel as an acrostic for the phrase “*Yesh Shishim Ribu Osiyos LaTorah*,” meaning “There are 600,000 letters in the Torah. This refers to the fact that every Jew has a deep personal connection with the Torah which raises him above the level of the mundane. 2) The original meaning of the name, as it was given to Yaakov after he wrestled with the angel: “You struggled with angels and with men and you were victorious.” This indicates that a Jew must deal with, and sometimes even struggle with, the world.

The message is that a Jew's natural place is in the Torah which is the source of his life. Thus everything he does must be based on and in accordance with the teachings of the Torah. But his completeness as a Jew is attained only when he takes the

teachings of the Torah out into the world and deals directly with the people of the world and the forces of nature, affecting a transformation of the world into a place where G-d is revealed. When a Jew follows this path he is guaranteed that he will be successful and victorious.

The names “Aryeh” and “Leib” both mean “lion” – Aryeh in Hebrew and Leib in Yiddish. This teaches us that we must approach the task with the courage of a lion. Whether we are dealing with holy matters (as indicated by “Aryeh” in Hebrew, the holy language) or with worldly matters (as indicated by “Leib” in Yiddish, a worldly language) a Jew must overcome all obstacles to accomplish this mission.

Thus Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib's very name continues to be an inspiration.

Two days after Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib's *yahrtzeit* that year, Melech HaMoshiach distributed the famous *D'var Malchus* book containing explanations on the laws of Moshiach in Rambam. He called this book itself a *maamer*. It was dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib. Another famous event took place that day: After the davening, as Melech HaMoshiach began walking out of the Beis Ha'midrash, everyone started singing “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach Lolam Va'ed!*” and Melech HaMoshiach encouraged their singing.

MY STORY

At this point I feel that it is important for me to relate the effect that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib has had on me personally. I was born into a Rabbinical family. My father, a Rav in Minnesota, was a *musmach* of (i.e. received Rabbinical ordination from) HaRav Moshe Feinstein. My grandfather, a Rav in Uzda, Russia – Rav Moshe Feinstein's home town – was a close friend of the Feinstein family. It was in this atmosphere that I was raised. I went to Jewish day schools in Minnesota and Chicago and then to Yeshiva University High School in New York City.

Every yeshiva has its particular *hashkafa* (philosophical outlook) but at Yeshiva University (YU) this was hard to define. Academically, YU combined a high standard in both Talmudic and secular studies. Philosophically, however, there was a great tension between these two worlds and they often collided. In those days, the Rosh Yeshiva, HaRav Joseph B. Soloveitchick, wrote papers and delivered lectures on these issues, but there was a significant gap between what he taught and the policies of administrators and teachers, which was often a matter of “jumping back and forth between the two paths” of the holy and the secular.

I remember a discussion that took place when I was 12 or 13 years old, during my freshman year in yeshiva. Two of my friends, Moshe and Chaim were arguing about what *Torah* is. Moshe said that all knowledge – even the secular studies – is “Torah” since all knowledge is truth (so he claimed) and Torah is truth. Chaim disagreed claiming that only the Torah itself is Torah while all other knowledge is not necessarily true. I listened to their argument thinking, “This is a very interesting question. I wonder what the real answer is. Anyway, I'm glad they're not asking me...” Suddenly Moshe said to Chaim, “Let's ask Shimon. He's in a higher *shiur* (Talmud class) than both

of us. For sure he knows.” I was on the spot and I had to think fast. Since I didn't know the answer for sure, I just said something to make them both happy and put the argument to rest. But I was not satisfied.

After yeshiva, I returned home to Minnesota and enrolled in the University of Minnesota's Institute of Technology with a major in physics. It was clear to me that Torah was *the* source of truth, but I was interested in investigating whether science could also be a source of truth. Here too, at the University of Minnesota, a casual conversation that took place one day became a turning point in this search.

We must approach the task with the courage of a lion. Whether we are dealing with holy matters or with worldly matters, a Jew must overcome all obstacles to accomplish this mission.

I was sitting at a table in the physics library studying when a fellow student turned to me and asked me to explain to him a Chemistry lab assignment that we were supposed to do. It wasn't the procedure that he didn't understand but rather the concepts behind it – what was going on among the atoms involved. I began to explain to him the atomic interactions that were taking place in this experiment. As I spoke a feeling of excitement came over me. The intricacies of the structure of the atoms and the complexities of the interactions that I was describing literally filled me with awe and at the end of my explanation I blurted out,

“...And some people think that all this just evolved!” I did not know what my classmate himself believed or how he would react to my pronouncement, but the smile on his face assured me that he agreed that it was absurd that all this had just evolved.

This casual event was a turning point for me in my search for it showed me that science itself could be a source of knowledge of G-d. If used properly, it could be a support for the truth of the Torah and there would no longer have to be any conflict between them. A seed was planted that would yet grow.

At this point I had not yet studied Chabad Chassidus. In fact, I had been part of a circle of students at YU who were involved with Lubavitch and would go to Crown Heights occasionally, and a few times I tried to read s'farim of Chassidus. But, even though I was well trained in Talmud and Halacha, I couldn't understand the s'farim of Chassidus. One of my trips to Crown Heights was for the yom tov of Sukkos 5727 (1966). I was staying with a family on President Street and once, during *Chol HaMoed*, I went for a walk. I was walking absent mindedly down President Street when suddenly I came upon an unusual scene. I saw a man get out of a parked car, open the back door of the car and continue to hold the door open as he stood there, straight as a soldier. For some reason the man was staring at me as though he wanted me to get in the car. Since I didn't know who he was and the entire scene appeared very strange, I was scared and froze in my tracks.

I stood there for a few moments trying to decide if I should continue walking or turn around and go the other way. Suddenly, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach walked out of the driveway and, as he passed very close in front of me, looked at me – deeply into my eyes. He continued walking to the car and got into the back seat, after which the car drove off. This event

made a very strong impression on me which I can still feel almost forty years later! I was connected.

My first encounter with Chabad Chassidus came about four years later while I was a student at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa. The well known chassid Reuven Dunin, who lived in the area, used to come to the Technion and talk to the students. Some of us would go to his house for Shabbos and he would learn a sicha with us after the seuda. Once he began to doze off as he taught the sicha (he worked very hard all week as a tractor driver) and he asked me to continue teaching the sicha. Me?! I didn't even know how to learn Chassidus, much less how to teach it. But he fell asleep and I had no choice but to teach, so with G-d's help, I taught. As I read the sicha out loud, it became very clear to me and I understood it and I was actually able to explain it. The gates of Chassidus had been opened for me.

I continued to learn Chassidus over the coming years and began to identify with it, but all this just increased the tension between my profession and my identity. The more I studied the deep wisdom of Chassidus, the less I was interested in the lower wisdom of mathematics. For me, these were two separate worlds and they were in collision. Many times I considered giving up mathematics and devoting myself exclusively to learning and teaching Chassidus. Then came my yechidus with Melech HaMoshiach.

A few months after we were married, my wife and I had the z'chus to have yechidus

with Melech HaMoshiach. It was the night after Chanuka, 5734 (1973) at 3:40 a.m. that we entered the *Kodesh HaKadashim* – the yechidus room. I gave our letter to Melech HaMoshiach. He read it and then without looking up he asked me “What is your profession?” Thoughts began to flash through my mind at lightning speed. Firstly, the question took me by surprise. I thought

he would ask me questions about what I was learning in Chassidus and things like that. Secondly, I didn't think of myself as actually having a profession at that time. I was a graduate student in mathematics at the University of Minnesota and simultaneously teaching undergraduate courses in mathematics (a position known as a “teaching assistant”) but I just thought of that as my studies, not my profession. Thirdly, I was not earning enough money from the University and was considering accepting a position I had just been offered to teach Jewish studies part time at a Jewish school in Minnesota. Maybe that was my profession. (Here, again, the tension between the two worlds appeared.) But I didn't have much time to think and I responded, “I'm a teaching assistant in mathematics at the university.”

There is a well known saying of the Rebbe Maharash that the intellectual and emotional structure of a chassid follows his first yechidus, at which time his personal service of G-d is established in accordance with his true self. Thus it was established in my yechidus that my profession would remain teaching mathematics.

But the conflict was not yet resolved. Having identified with chassidus, I became very critical of mathematics. I began to challenge the use of mathematics as a representation of reality and questioned the very validity of mathematics.

Actually, something productive came out of this crisis as I realized the role that the axiomatic method plays in mathematics. Every mathematical theory must be based on certain axioms or assumptions, and those axioms can serve as an interface or – a buffer – between the theory and reality. One can proceed to develop the theory with a clear conscience knowing that the theory is not about reality itself but rather about the axioms. It's about the assumptions that he made about reality. Based on these assumptions this and

that will follow. It is only at the point of stating the axioms that one must be concerned about the extent to which his assumptions accurately represent reality.

It was some years later that I heard about Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib. At a small farbrengen in Minnesota, Rabbi Moshe Feller was talking about a trip to Israel from which he had just returned. He mentioned that he had visited the grave of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib in Tzfas and continued to speak about him. I was fascinated by this personality who was devoted to the study of Chassidus throughout his life and simultaneously studied and did research in mathematics, having written a paper of major significance. Later, when I actually saw a copy of the paper, I was overcome by a feeling of joy and exhilaration followed by a feeling of inner peace. The conflict was essentially over. The very fact that such a person had existed and that he was the son of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and the brother of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, was for me a sign that the two worlds could be truly unified.

The actual unification took place some time later when I saw the sicha on Parshas Noach in which Melech HaMoshiach explains that the scientific theories and discoveries of the past 150 years were predicted by the Zohar and they are a preparation for the Era of Moshiach (Likkutei Sichos vol. 15. pp. 42-48). In the sicha the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach explains in detail exactly how the modern sciences prepare the world for Moshiach, the primary way being that they reveal the unity that exists within nature. This prepares the world for the revelation of the ultimate unity – the absolute unity of G-d which is to be revealed in the Era of Moshiach.

In case one may have the idea to go to college to study the sciences, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach warns against this. An entire section of the sicha is devoted to explaining the

Halachic prohibition and danger in going to college. This is because of the prevalence of ideas studied in college courses that are contrary to the fundamental beliefs of Judaism, and the atmosphere of immodesty which prevails.

Elsewhere, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach explains a more subtle problem in taking college courses together with studying Torah. The concepts, attitudes and ways of thinking which one picks up from the college courses will carry over to his learning of Torah and contaminate it. He will no longer be studying Torah on its own terms, but rather he will be approaching it from a secular viewpoint. This may even result in his interpreting concepts in the Torah in such a way to make them consistent with his secular studies. (Unfortunately, I saw many examples of this at YU.)

Indeed, Melech HaMoshiach says that the endeavor of using the sciences for Torah purposes is not for everyone, only for those who are qualified to do it. One must be sure that he is elevating the science rather than having the science pull him down.

THE RYAL INSTITUTE

In 1990-91 Melech HaMoshiach announced that the time of the Geula had arrived and that everything in the world had to be connected to Moshiach and the Geula. One day in the fall of 1991, I found a letter printed in the back of the *Likkutei Sichos* in which Melech HaMoshiach is responding to one who had identified himself as a “secular Jew.” The entire letter was devoted to explaining that there is no such thing as a secular Jew. There are Jews whose profession deals only with holy matters and there are Jews who must deal with secular matters in their profession. But there is no such thing as a secular Jew – all Jews are holy. This was exactly my field of interest. Then I noticed that the letter was dated 13 Iyar, 5732 (1972) – Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh

Leib’s 20th yahrtzeit! I realized that in half a year (13 Iyar, 5752 (1992)) would be his 40th yahrtzeit and it occurred to me that it would be a wonderful idea to have a conference honoring his 40th yahrtzeit on exactly these topics – the holy and the secular in the Era of Moshiach.

When the concept was finally crystallized, the theme of the conference was “The Role of Science in the Era of Moshiach.” I worked together with Rabbi Moshe Feller and Rabbi Asher Zeilingold to organize the

The endeavor of using the sciences for Torah purposes is not for everyone, only for those who are qualified to do it. One must be sure that he is elevating the science rather than having the science pull him down.

conference which took place on 13-14 Iyar, 5752 in S. Paul, Minnesota. The guest speakers were Professor Pesach (Paul) Rosenbloom, the famous Lubavitcher mathematician to whom Melech HaMoshiach gave Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s mathematical manuscript to edit and publish, and Dr. Tsvi Saks, another well known Lubavitcher mathematician, known for his lectures on Mathematics and Chassidus.

That Fall, my family and I moved to Crown Heights and the next Spring I contemplated making another

conference for Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s 41st yahrtzeit. After thinking it through I decided against it since I was new in Crown Heights and not so familiar with the people and places etc. Also, I did not have the same sense of urgency as I did at the 40th yahrtzeit – a major milestone.

Just to be sure, however, I wrote a letter to Melech HaMoshiach asking: 1) Should I make a Moshiach and science conference in New York similar to the one I had made in Minnesota the year before and 2) Should I publish the proceedings of the conference of the previous year. To both questions Melech HaMoshiach answered: “Yes.”

Thus a second Moshiach and Science conference took place on 11-13 Iyar, 5753 in Crown Heights. The main speaker was Rabbi Dr. Naftali Berg, a Lubavitcher chassid and director of research of the Advanced Technology Office of the Pentagon’s Army Research Laboratory. He spoke about “Swords Into Plowshares at the Pentagon.”

On the morning of 11 Iyar that year, before I went to the conference, it occurred to me that there should be an institute to organize such conferences every year and to carry on other Moshiach and science research. I wrote a letter to Melech HaMoshiach that morning asking if we should establish such an institute to be called the “Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences.” Later in the afternoon, towards the end of that day’s session, I received a message that that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach gave his consent and bracha.

The RYAL Institute was established and, with G-d’s help, we have held a Moshiach and Science conference every year since, in addition to various publications.

From all the above we see some of the ways in which Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib continues to inspire Jewish scientists to this very day.

OUT OF THE GREATEST DARKNESS THE GREATEST LIGHT CAN SHINE

BY SHAI GEFEN

*Nadav Cohen is one of hundreds of Israeli backpackers who have returned to their roots. * His first encounter with the Rebbe's shluchim was in India. * The story of a recent baal t'shuva.*

This phenomenon has been growing in recent years, i.e. dozens, if not hundreds of backpackers have become religious after touring India. They go to India in order to find some spirituality, which they get in full measure from the Rebbe's shluchim, who are dispersed throughout the Far East.

Touring India became a fad over a decade ago, when it was easier to get visas. Tens of thousands of Israelis go to India every year. Hundreds of them have returned to their roots thanks to the Chabad houses in India.

This search for spirituality generally begins after they finish their army service. There in India, far from the tumult of life in Eretz Yisroel and their exposure to the anti-religious Israeli media, it's a lot easier for them to explore their Judaism. Paradoxically, it is there, while hiking through the natural beauty of India, going centuries back in time, that they begin to think of their futures.

Nadav Cohen, a young Israeli, went through this process and became excited about Judaism and chassidus in India. Nadav was in India for one year and three months, and experienced more than the average Israeli backpacker does. Yet today he is a yeshiva bachur, and if that wasn't enough, he himself went

on shlichus to Pushkar, in India, to help the local shliach, Rabbi Shimmy Goldstein.

Nadav says that he experienced everything in India. He went to the temples and was hosted in primitive villages where the homes are made of mud, just as they were hundreds of years ago. Yet it was in India that he found the path back to his own heritage.

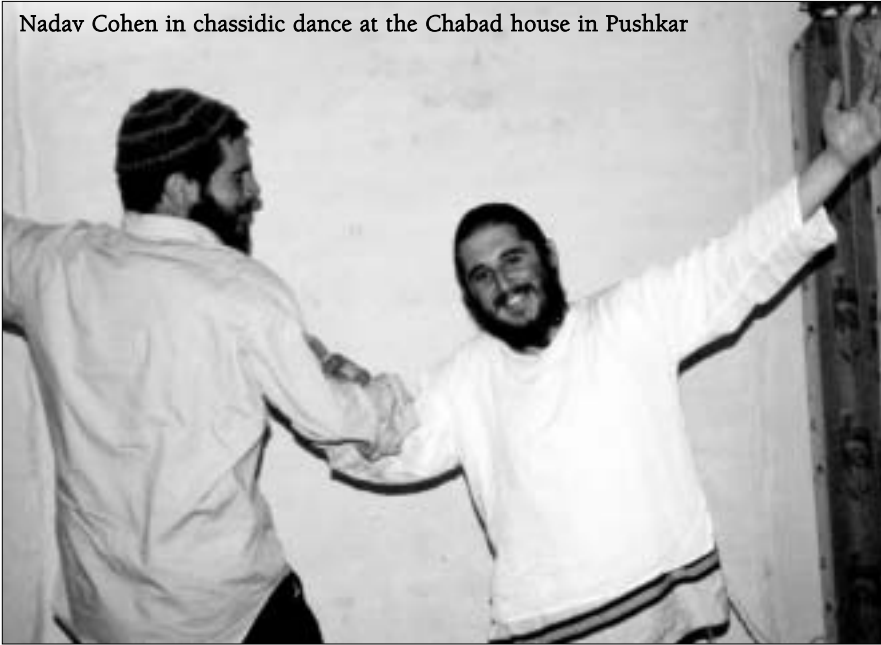
* * *

Nadav Cohen was born on moshav Nir Yisroel, near Ashkelon. He attended school in moshav Be'er Tuvia, which was completely non-



The Chabad house in Pushkar (beware of monkeys!)

Nadav Cohen in chassidic dance at the Chabad house in Pushkar



religious. His family was secular, although his grandfather was religious and his father had attended yeshiva. As time went by, even the tradition of Kiddush on Friday night ceased.

Nadav did what every typical Israeli does – he went to high school and did his army duty, serving in the field for Army Intelligence. He served one year in Gaza and two years at the command post in Be'er Sheva. "I was privy to a good deal of top secret information regarding security, things I can't talk about it, of course," he says.

Even after his army discharge, Nadav didn't see himself as someone who was searching for meaning in life. "I was released from the army and began working for a company that made vending machines. After a year and a half of this, I realized that all I was doing was running after money. I saw this as purposeless and didn't want to continue living such a life."

Like many others, Nadav found himself planning for a long trip to India, a trip in which he was going to search for the unknown, for the

"After a year and a half of this, I realized that all I was doing was running after money. I saw this as purposeless and didn't want to continue living such a life."

spirituality and mysticism of India.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I was looking to find myself. Like many of my friends, I decided I was going to India."

Nadav left for India three years ago, along with two friends. "They were going for a month, but I stayed for half a year."

He began this first trip in the magnificent Himalayas in northern India. He sometimes scaled mountain peaks that stretched between India and Nepal at heights of 7000 meters. The area is flooded with Israelis, and they experience many accidents.

Nadav knew an Israeli who was killed by a fallen tree. Others are killed in avalanches or unexpected falls.

Nadav doesn't tire of describing the incredible scenery: gorgeous views, endless forests, snow-capped mountains, waterfalls, and valleys. Bears and other wild animals roam the mountains. "The Indians who live in the Himalayas are hospitable as they see us as a source of income."

It was in the Himalayas that Nadav began his introspection. "I looked at myself as an onlooker would; I saw the Israeli guys with me and saw myself in them. They were my mirror through which I could tell where I was at. I suddenly began to realize that everything I was doing was only being done out of habit.

"This self-involvement, wondering what I was doing here in the world, wasn't from a religious perspective, but simply pragmatic. No wonder that these thoughts bothered me a great deal."

These conclusions didn't lead Nadav directly to Judaism. He visited the temples of India and watched their ceremonies. "I went to a distant village where they had bizarre forms of idol worship. I went to every possible place. They brought me to gurus called "Babas" who live in tunnels, each one trying to prove to you how much he knows. But most of them didn't impress me at all. They didn't supply the goods, and my thoughts continued to race."

Nadav stayed with many of the locals, whom he found very friendly. Their houses, however, were wretched and filthy. Each home consists of a large room where they all sleep. The kitchen has one small burner on which they prepare food.

Nadav spent a great deal of time with the locals and became familiar with their way of life, doing this for over a year. Their farming is

ADVENTURES IN INDIA

“I went to distant places where even Israeli tourists don’t go,” says Nadav. “The further the place, the more primitive they are. There are places in India where you travel in a bus that’s forty years old, through mountains and over cliffs, and you’re sure you’re going to fall into the abyss at any moment.

“On one trip, we traveled on a pitted road when the road ahead of us became flooded. We had to get off the bus and swim to the other side and hitch a ride over there. I hitched a ride on a large truck and settled down in the back for the six-hour ride.”

primitive too. There are villages where they spend the entire summer drying straw for their cows for the winter, since every home has, on average, two cows.

Throughout his stay in India, Nadav experienced a series of serendipitous encounters. “Often when I thought of someone – someone from the army or someone with whom I attended school – I suddenly saw him. Many strange things happened that I had never experienced before. I began to understand that the world wasn’t random, and that all is controlled from Above. Today I know that this is called *Hashgacha Pratit*.”

After half a year, Nadav returned to Eretz Yisroel because his father had been hospitalized. Then he decided to go back to India. “I loved the life there and it made me feel at peace. I loved the trips far from Eretz Yisroel, where I was removed from all the problems back home.”

When Nadav returned to Eretz Yisroel, he waited for a friend to return money that was owed him, so he could afford to go back to India.

In the meantime, Divine Providence led him to Mitzpeh Rimon, “Thailand of Israel” as it’s called, which attracts people searching for spirituality or meaning in life. He attended many workshops on self-awareness, yoga and various exercises. “I planned on being in Mitzpeh Rimon for a month, and ended up staying for half a year.” It was there that he began learning more about Judaism.

He became acquainted with the teachings of Chabad only two days before his second trip to India. “I met a cousin of mine, who gave me the *Tanya* and asked me to read it in my free time. When I was in India I began reading the *Tanya* and slowly began understanding that religion is far richer and more complicated than I had thought, that it had a great deal of depth.”

When he returned to Dramsala two years ago, in Sivan of 5762, he met his cousin who had become involved in Judaism through Chabad over there. “The confluence of events was orchestrated from Above, and

this is what convinced me to join Chabad. The truth is that I didn’t want to go, but agreed to go because my cousin asked me to.” The process was set in motion, but Nadav was still in search-mode and observant Judaism didn’t appeal to him.

“In the course of a few days I experienced a series of Hashgacha Pratit, and this is what led me to the Chabad house in Dramsala, to Rabbi Dror Shaul. I went to the Chabad house every day to visit, and just to see what the place was about. At a certain point, I felt I was in, that I had arrived at religion. The more I read of *Tanya*, the more I realized it was true, but I still made no big steps. I continued touring northern India and encountered a lot of idolatry. It wasn’t easy, because the entire time my thoughts raced about what I was going to do with the information I had read in *Tanya*. I didn’t know how to translate what I read into action.

“These thoughts bothered me throughout my trek. I was really troubled because inside it was clear

“I KNEW THAT IF I BECAME RELIGIOUS, IT WOULD BE ONLY AS A CHASSID”

“At the very beginning, after I started learning *Tanya*, I knew that the True Light was hidden within it. For the first time I understood that Torah is not just a set of rules, but something that speaks to the neshama. I realized that religion is far more than I thought it was. The more I learned, the more clear it became to me that if I was to become religious, it would be solely to become a chassid.

“It was in India that I wrote my first letter to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. I asked that I merit to come close to Judaism. After writing the letter, I felt that it had given me additional strength to return to Hashem. I felt that I was succeeding in overcoming difficulties, as though I was born anew.”

Nadav studied more and more of the Rebbe’s teachings, and read about the Rebbe, and began feeling a strong pull towards the Rebbe.

“Today I am a Jew thanks to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.”

Last Tishrei, Nadav was among the thousands of guests in 770. It was hard to tell that he was recently a backpacker who went searching for so long in the most unholy of places.



Nadav Cohen's "upsheren" in Pushkar

to me that if I wanted to be involved in spirituality, it could only be through Judaism and chassidus. The big question was: when would I make the leap?

"On Tisha B'Av of two years ago, I decided to fast for the first time. I was in Dramsala and wasn't religious, but I felt that I had to fast.

"As I continued traveling, I continued to encounter Chabad. When I arrived in Manali I met Chabad there too.

"The strongest sign I got was after I fractured my leg on one of my trips. It was at the end of Elul. I had to stay in bed, and unfortunately I wasn't able to celebrate Rosh HaShana properly. I just couldn't move. That Yom Kippur was the first one I fasted, and this took place in India, of all places! I felt a strong

spiritual feeling that I cannot describe. I felt that I was being cleansed of all the filth that I had accumulated over the years.

"I didn't know how to daven. I knew nothing. All I knew was that I had to regret all I did and ask G-d for forgiveness.

"I felt involved in things on Sukkos and helped the Chabad house build a sukka. Between Sukkos and Simchas Torah I wanted to go to Pushkar, another city in northern India. I went to say

goodbye to the rabbi who had hosted me, and when he heard that I was going to the shliach in Pushkar, he got very excited. 'I was looking for a way to send him aravos for Hoshana Rabba, and now you can be the shliach mitzva!'

"I was amazed by this incidence of Hashgacha Pratit. I realized that Judaism wasn't going to let go of its hold on me at this stage.

"On Simchas Torah I was at Shimi Goldstein's Chabad house in Pushkar. The joy was amazing and unforgettable. All the Israelis danced and rejoiced with the Torah in the most remarkable way.

"The day after Yom Tov, I knew the time had come for me to put on t'fillin. I hadn't put on t'fillin since my bar mitzva. I found it ironic that I was beginning to put t'fillin on

again in India when I hadn't done so in Eretz Yisroel for so many years.

"It was in Pushkar that the real turning point in my life took place. I stopped touring and knew I was already a Chabadnik, and that I had to make up for lost time. All the thoughts that had raced about in my mind on the first trip became focused on the thought that from now on I would begin to fulfill all the mitzvos.

"I didn't know how to tell my parents about this. My mother was apprehensive, 'What?! You're going to suddenly show up in a black hat?' she asked. My family was tremendously uptight about me; they didn't understand what I had become. I had to have lots of conversations with them to calm them down.

"I wanted to return to Eretz Yisroel to attend yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, where many of the backpackers who became baalei t'shuva in India go to learn. Shimi Goldstein suggested that I stay in Pushkar and help him. I agreed to stay. Naturally, I grew a beard and cut my long hair.

"After two or three months I returned home and went directly to the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. In order to prevent my old friends from freaking out, the first month I met with them and my family and talked.

"Why did it take place in India? I think it's because out of the greatest darkness the greatest light can shine."

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FROM YOUR MOUTH TO G-D'S EARS

BY MOLLY KUPCHIK

*They told her nobody would show up, but she went ahead anyway and asked young girls to get up early on Shabbos Mevarchim and say T'hillim. The results were pleasantly surprising. * How the T'hillim Group came to be, presented for Shavuos, the yahrtzeit of Dovid HaMelech, author of T'hillim.*

In honor of Shavuos, the day that marks the passing of Dovid HaMelech a"h, the author of T'hillim, we interviewed Mrs. Mussia Mendelssohn, who runs B'nos ACHAT Chabad. What is B'nos ACHAT Chabad? The Hebrew letters ACHAT stand for: Irgun Chevrat T'hillim.

Every Shabbos Mevarchim, dozens of girls gather at 7:30 in the morning to say the entire T'hillim before Shacharis, as per the enactment of the Rebbe Rayatz. Mrs. Mendelssohn has proven that not only men and adults can say the entire T'hillim, but young girls can do it too!

What gave you the idea to start this organization?

I've been living in B'nei Brak for a number of years now and I teach in Ateret Chaya. Before Shabbos Mevarchim Adar 5762, I came up with this idea of starting an organization for girls to say T'hillim on Shabbos Mevarchim. There was no

such group for Chabad girls in B'nei Brak, or in any Chabad community anywhere, as far as I know.

The idea took off and more and more girls joined.

Describe what happens on Shabbos Mevarchim.

Every Shabbos Mevarchim, dozens of Lubavitcher girls in B'nei Brak convene in the women's section of the Chabad shul on Rashi Street. I make sure things run smoothly and quietly, with the girls taking turns serving as chazanit. When we finish the T'hillim, which takes about two hours, we say the Rebbe's chapter of T'hillim together, the *HaYom Yom*, and another chapter of T'hillim for those who need a refua shleima. Then I say a short d'var Torah about the month we are blessing that Shabbos.

In recent months we have also had guests tell a miracle story of the Rebbe MH"M. The girls get some nosh, and the next day (Sunday) we raffle off a

gold ring.

Who comes on Shabbos Mevarchim?

We intended it for Chabad girls living in B'nei Brak, but we have also had non-Lubavitcher girls coming. The girls are in grades one to nine and ten. Saying T'hillim unites girls of all ages.

As the months went by, more girls heard about it and joined. I urge the girls to convince other girls to come and every month I see new faces.

* * *

At first, Mrs. Mendelssohn was discouraged by well-meaning friends, who told her she'd be lucky if three girls showed up. However, to everyone's surprise, about seventy girls fill the Ezras Nashim and say T'hillim. This directly impacts on the women who regularly show up for davening, who express their amazement and join in the saying of T'hillim.

How do you explain the great response?

They are simply happy to come, even though for some of them this entails getting up early on Shabbos morning and a long walk. Some girls walk for half an hour each way. Some girls stay over with friends on Shabbos Mevarchim just so that they can join our T'hillim group.

I would like to make special mention of the daughters of the shluchim in Givatayim, the Beckermans, who walk a long distance

accompanied by a parent.

ACHAT has an advantage in that it has a regular time and place. The girls know there are no exceptions, and that T'hillim is said every Shabbos Mevarchim. I let them know that B'not ACHAT don't go on vacation or get a break, and they've gotten used to coming.

Do any parents complain about the early wake-up Shabbos morning?

On the contrary! Some mothers have told me, "Thanks to your project, the whole family says T'hillim on Shabbos Mevarchim."

Since it takes place early in the morning, some of the girls need an adult to walk them. If a brother or older sister walk with them, they stay in shul already to say T'hillim too.

What about you – isn't it hard for you to leave your children every Shabbos Mevarchim to go to shul?

No. My children are older, with the youngest one in third grade, and

At first, she was discouraged by well-meaning friends, who told her she'd be lucky if three girls showed up. However, to everyone's surprise, about seventy girls fill the Ezras Nashim and say T'hillim.

she comes along too and even finishes T'hillim!

How do you cover the costs of the nosh and raffle prizes?

The financial end is the hardest

part of the project. There is no organization that helps us with this and every month I have to break my head to figure out how to cover my expenses. I would be thrilled to have community support. People can dedicate the recitation of T'hillim as a z'chus or l'ilui nishmas a loved one.

Have you reported to the Rebbe about ACHAT?

I write to the Rebbe every month before Shabbos Mevarchim and ask for a bracha for success. After Shabbos, I report how it went and include a list of the participants.

I've gotten many encouraging answers and brachos through the *Igros Kodesh*. I went through a particularly difficult period for a few months when I didn't know how I could carry on with such high expenses. I wrote to the Rebbe, saying I know how important this is, but it's so hard for me to continue.

In the letter I opened to, the Rebbe wrote that we have been promised that chassidim will come out on top, and it spoke about mesirus nefesh. I was encouraged and I continued despite the hardships and debts.

Every month I see brachos and Divine Providence. One Shabbos Mevarchim Iyar I had no idea how much nosh to buy because after the long vacation I anticipated that fewer girls would show up. I decided to buy 60 treats, and it wasn't easy finding them two days after Pesach. How many girls showed up that Shabbos? 60!

There were times that I was ready to give up, but I always saw Divine Providence at work that motivated me to continue.

* * *

How about you, dear reader? Maybe you can organize a T'hillim group in your community, or even in your own family? This way, we will add some more books of T'hillim to the scales and bring Moshiach now!

JOIN IN THE Z'CHUS

The members of ACHAT have a bi-annual gathering, before Shavuos, the yahrtzeit of Dovid HaMelech a"h, the author of T'hillim, and in the month of Adar, the anniversary of the founding of the organization.

At one of these gatherings, the girls met at the Chabad shul on Rashi Street for a full dinner with music and song. The speakers spoke about the z'chus the girls had to participate in the fulfillment of the Rebbe Rayatz's horaa to say T'hillim on Shabbos Mevarchim, thus strengthening their connection to the Rebbe MH"M.

Mrs. Rochel Rothchild, one of the speakers, spoke to the girls about the uniqueness of T'hillim. She was so moved by the girls that she decided to start a similar organization where she lives, in Rishon L'Tziyon.

Mrs. Esther Cohen of Elad told her personal story, about how she became a baalas t'shuva because of the recitation of T'hillim by girls, and Dovid the mime portrayed a story about a man who was saved in the merit of T'hillim.

Girls with outstanding attendance were given certificates and beautiful T'hillims. There was also a raffle, with the first prize being a dollar from the Rebbe.

About 90 girls participated in the event and were greatly inspired to join in future gatherings.

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WHEN EVEN THE FAMOUS PIGEON CURE FAILS...

Four amazing miracle stories of the Rebbe MH”M

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG

YOU TELL THE REBBE ALL

A few weeks ago, we were at a *shalom zachar* in Kfar Chabad. Among the guests was a fellow who is very much the cold intellectual. To tell you the truth, I would never have believed that he could tell such a story, but this is what he said:

“Thirty years ago, I was sick with hepatitis. I was getting worse, but the doctors could do nothing to help me except to numb the pain. My condition deteriorated over six months.

“We used the famous pigeon cure, and 86 pigeons gave up their lives for the sake of my health. When Dr. Erez, the doctor of Kfar Chabad at the time, would meet me, she would ask, ‘Nu, how many pigeons did you kill today?’ Despite this, I was still in bad shape.

“For some reason, I thought you don’t write to the Rebbe about health matters. I wrote about other things but I never mentioned my health, even when it became unbearable.

“One day, after half a year of writhing in pain, I stood in front of the Rebbe’s picture [again, I wouldn’t have believed it of this person – LYG] and said: Rebbe, please help me!

“The next day, Menachem (Manny) Wolf of Kehos said to me, ‘How are you?’

“‘Baruch Hashem,’ I answered, ‘what’s up?’

“I tried to make sure that nobody would know about my condition aside from my family and the doctors. I didn’t like the idea of people knowing about my health.

“‘No, I asked you how your health is?’

“We used the famous pigeon cure, and 86 pigeons gave up their lives for the sake of my health. When Dr. Erez, the doctor of Kfar Chabad at the time, would meet me, she would ask, ‘Nu, how many pigeons did you kill today?’”

“‘Why are you asking me all of a sudden?’ I wondered.

“‘You should know,’ he said, ‘that there’s no ‘being smart’ when it comes to the Rebbe, and when there’s a problem, you need to write the Rebbe all the details!’

“I was taken aback. ‘Why are you telling me this?’ I asked.

“‘This morning,’ he said, ‘I spoke with my brother-in-law, the secretary, Rabbi Binyamin Klein, and he told me that the Rebbe had inquired about

your health. From now on, you should know that you need to write the Rebbe everything, with all the details ...”

THE REAL STORY

At one of the chassidus classes that I give in *Beis Moshiaich E’Nashim* on 76 Rechov Yaffo in Yerushalayim, one of the women who had recently become religious told this story:

“Recently, before I began keeping mitzvos, I had a fire in the store we owned. We sustained great damage and lost a lot of money. I was distraught by it all, and that’s when someone told me that you can ask the Rebbe questions now too, and get answers. I decided I had nothing to lose.

“I wrote to the Rebbe and put the letter into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The answer I opened to was amazing. The Rebbe wrote that we should see the fulfillment of the statement that after a fire one becomes wealthy!

“I was flabbergasted by this answer. This was the push that got me to begin keeping mitzvos and to attend a shiur here and there. I bought some volumes of *Igros Kodesh* and I write to the Rebbe whenever something comes up. I have hung up pictures of the Rebbe in my home. My family is afraid that I have gone completely mad.

“A year ago, a growth was discovered in my niece’s neck. The doctors said that she needed surgery, but it was complicated and there was no assurance that it would be successful. I was embarrassed to tell my sister about the Rebbe and the *Igros*

Kodesh, but I wrote a letter about the situation and put it into the *Igros Kodesh*. The Rebbe answered that we should do as the doctors advised, and gave a bracha for a refua shleima.

“The operation was successful, baruch Hashem, and she’s all better.

“She had another medical problem recently, involving her eye, and my sister told me about this sadly. Again, I didn’t say anything but I wrote to the Rebbe. The Rebbe answered that the person should go to a specialist and not make do with a regular doctor, and do an eye exam and take care of this immediately so as to avoid another operation.

“I called my sister and told her not to rely on the doctor at the clinic but to see a top doctor and to do an eye exam.

“She asked me what prompted this advice and though I tried to avoid answering and stammered something or other, she didn’t understand and I had to unwillingly tell her that the Rebbe said what she should do.

“Which Rebbe,’ she wanted to know. I saw no purpose in not answering her, so I said: the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

“How did the Rebbe tell you what to do when...?’ she asked.

“I had to tell her the whole thing, about how I got an answer after the fire, and then about her daughter, and how this is what the Rebbe’s answer is now.

“At first she was incredulous, but then she finally understood that I was absolutely serious. She took her daughter to the best eye doctor at Shaarei Tzedek, and it turned out that treating her in time saved her from an operation, and now we anticipate a refua shleima.

SHOULD WE BUY A NEW APARTMENT?

I was riding the bus when my cell phone rang. On the line was a Lubavitcher woman who asked for my help in understanding the Rebbe’s

answer in the *Igros Kodesh*. She told me that due to financial difficulties, they had to sell their apartment in order to pay the mortgage at the bank, and now they were living in a rented apartment. However, they really wanted to own an apartment.

They thought of taking another mortgage and buying another apartment. Both of them work and make a nice living, and they would be able to make the payments, although it wouldn’t be easy.

Her husband wanted to buy an apartment in a certain area, but she was opposed to that because it was too close to their parents...

The answer in the *Igros Kodesh* was that generally it was preferable to buy an apartment, and instead of paying money to a landlord, to make payments towards the mortgage and own the apartment. However, this situation was different for three reasons. Firstly, the wife’s opinion had to be taken into consideration. Secondly, as far as chinuch for the children, the place had to have an atmosphere of *yiras Shamayim* and chassidus. And, thirdly, since his livelihood kept him away from home most of the day, it made sense for them to live near his wife’s friends so she could leave her children with a friend or find someone suitable to watch them if she wanted to go out.

That was the Rebbe’s answer, and the woman wanted to know whether this was a positive answer since the apartment they found was just what she wanted: in a location with an environment of *yiras Shamayim* and chassidus, and she had friends there who could watch her children in the evening when her husband wasn’t home much. Yet, the letter made it sound like the Rebbe was negating the idea.

I said that in my humble opinion, the no was being said to the apartment that her husband wanted, and the Rebbe was negating this for three reasons. I saw this as a clear answer to

buy the apartment she wanted because it fulfilled the three conditions.

MUNIK’S ANSWER

In the Golan Heights lives a Jew by the name of Menachem Mendel, who is known as Munik. Some people asked him the following: There are Jews who are not yet Shomer Shabbos, but before going to work they want to daven. Would he be their chazan?

Munik wasn’t sure how to respond. He asked the Rebbe and the answer he opened to in the *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 11, p. 255) is addressed to a person named Junik (similar to Munik) and says the following:

In answer to your letter ... in which you ask:

There is a quorum in a synagogue where less than ten congregants are Shabbos observant, and all the rest are not, Heaven protect us. While passing by there on Shabbos, he was asked to come in to lead the services in the first minyan, since they are in a hurry to get to work. Despite this, they wish to pray with a quorum, and many of them recite Kaddish, etc. The question is: should you accede to their request and lead the services.

It would seem from your description that they themselves do not wish to lead the services because they realize that someone who is not Shabbos observant should not do so. And if you do not accept, the minyan will be cancelled, and most likely the majority of them will not pray at all.

If that is the case, I do not approve of zealotry in a place where it is not entirely appropriate, and [the rule is] that we tell a person to commit a minor transgression in order to save his friend from a severe sin. Even though there are those who opine that this rule applies only where you would anyway have a share in the sin of the friend, that is not so according to the practice of chassidus [i.e., when going beyond the letter of the law].

Munik had his answer.

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DICTATORSHIP & CHUTZPA

BY SHAI GEFEN

SHARON AND MOFAZ – PROMOTERS OF TERROR

It was shocking to see what has happened since the Likud referendum took place. In a normal democratic country, if the prime minister's political plan were to be overwhelmingly rejected by his party, even after he threatened that this referendum was about trust in him, he would resign. His electorate told him precisely what they think of his dangerous plan. They put all considerations aside and voted directly on the plan.

But our prime minister doesn't care. He announced that he would continue to promote his plan, and he has been talking about implementing a similar plan to the one that was just rejected.

The one who decided to hold the referendum was none other than Sharon himself, who even declared that the referendum would **obligate him**. So what happened? Even famous dictatorships tried to cover up their crimes by saying the people were behind them. They tried to put up a good front, to show the world that they were doing what their people wanted.

In Israel, however, our prime minister talks with the utmost brazenness and acts as though he leads a dictatorship where he can do as he pleases. According to the rules of a democracy, a failure such as the one he sustained in the referendum would send him straight to his ranch.

The more Sharon and his defense minister try to promote the plan, the more we suffer. First there was the heinous massacre on the day of the referendum which wiped out a pregnant mother and her four young children. This was followed by an

additional attack during the Shiva on the mourners, where miraculously no one was injured. These events prove how terror will continue to be the modus operandi of our enemies as long as we talk about expelling our brothers and sisters from their homes.

When someone with the position of defense minister announces that establishing yishuvim was a historic mistake and that in another five years they will no longer exist, why shouldn't terror organizations butcher the Jews who live there? Why shouldn't they hasten the expulsion of Jews from the area that the Israeli Defense Minister says we settled in error?

Defense Minister Mofaz promotes terror. He not only gives a sense of reward to terror, and victory to those who have replaced Yassin and Rantisi, but he is the man who fans the battle lust of the terrorists. Who would have imagined that a Defense Minister would talk this way after such a defeat at the polls?

We may not be quiet when politicians change their views according to expediency and promises about their placement on the list. If Mofaz thinks that these announcements of his will help advance his political career, he's making a serious mistake. He will find himself in the same position as the Defense Minister who was so similar to him, Yitzchok Mordechai. The latter also did everything to undermine Israel's defense and supported a withdrawal from parts of our land to gain popularity. We all still remember his shocking statement that he wouldn't ignite the Middle East because of some old "ruins" in Chevron. We also know that his career ended in criminal court.

Mr. Mofaz! Your playing with the lives of Jews and with the fate of the yishuvim in Eretz Yisroel as though the latter are your personal real estate is extremely dangerous. What a shame that you are selling your image as a security professional for a weak promise that you will become the leader and the man at the top. Don't listen to your Achitofel advisors, for advice such as this has felled many before you.

MURDERED YET AGAIN!

What chutzpa and wickedness were displayed by Sharon in his visit during the Shiva to the Hatuel family. The man came to dance on the blood of innocent children, and he shamelessly continued to speak about expelling Jews from their homes to the mourners. The mother and her children were killed as they went out to convince members of Likud to vote against the expulsion of Jews from their homes. Sharon told Mr. Hatuel and other grieving relatives that he intends on advancing his plan! Many of those present felt that the family was being killed a second time.

Sharon! Your hands drip with blood. It's not the mouse that's the thief, but the hole. You cannot blame the Arab snipers, especially after the non-stop support they receive from you and your Defense Minister. When terrorist organizations hear your propaganda against the settlers of Gush Katif and how they ought to be thrown out of their homes, why shouldn't they help you do just that?

Sharon's visit to the Hatuels and the things he said there are far more frightening than a referendum of the nation. It shows us how low Sharon has stooped. He himself is in a state of

withdrawal, withdrawal from the nation, withdrawal from morality and decency, and withdrawal from anything Jewish.

The blood of Mrs. Hatuel, her four daughters and her unborn son will not rest until all the collaborators with our enemies are punished. It's hard to believe that we are witnesses to such cruelty and insanity. If one of us would have spoken about a scenario like this five years ago, we would have been looked at askance and advised to see a psychiatrist. Now it's happening.

We can better understand what the Rebbe kept saying that when you start with concessions and withdrawals, you cannot find the point at which you can stop. You not only concede but you become part of the propaganda arm of Hamas, whether willingly or unwillingly.

A HEARTFELT CALL TO THE CHAREIDI LEADERSHIP

A few days after Sharon's defeat in the Likud referendum, we heard about a conciliatory meeting between Sharon and representatives of Yahadus HaTorah. Sharon apologized to them for cutting himself off from the chareidim. News items said that Sharon began the meeting by talking about his political plan that was halted for the meantime, and then he went on to talk about financial problems in the chareidi community. He promised to deal favorably with all their requests, and concluded by repeating what he said about future political plans. The hint wasn't subtle.

When it came to the Likud referendum we saw a unity amongst us that we haven't seen in years. Chareidim of all stripes united in their opposition to the expulsion of Jews from Gaza.

Sharon more than hinted that when it comes to his next attempt to expel Jews from their homes and to turn our land over to our enemies, he will try to buy off the chareidi parties.

Unfortunately, we've seen in the past how chareidi leaders put security aside in exchange for money. And we know the consequences of those deals since we are suffering from them now.

It was hard to read the reports of the meeting in which only money issues came up, as though nothing is more important than our budgets. It's not that anybody is disparaging the dire financial needs of our mosdos, but the reports gave the impression that money would be given, as it was previously, in exchange for support of additional withdrawals.

This money will be money dipped in Jewish blood! Money soaked with the blood of the Hatuel family, and as

Chabad chassidim call upon representatives of the chareidi community: Don't raise a hand against Hashem and His anointed one!

the Rebbe often said, with money like this you cannot provide a proper chinuch.

Chabad chassidim call upon representatives of the chareidi community: Don't raise a hand against Hashem and His anointed one! Don't make the same mistake that you did with Oslo! Don't support another mistake, even in a roundabout manner, that will cost us in blood!

We hope that just as all the rabbanim were on the right side of the issue when it came to the Likud referendum, they will continue to stand strong, despite the desperate need for money.



CONTINUING TO WORK

The work for shleimus ha'Aretz must go on. We saw that when we work, we get results. The time has long passed when we could just relax and sound off at home. We were shown that when the Jewish nation wakes up and does what it has to do, there are immediate results, and that is why the work must go on!

The explaining and convincing cannot stop. We can't just wait for zero hour to take action. Every chassid has to see himself as a loyal soldier of the Rebbe on the issue of shleimus ha'Aretz, and must speak up wherever possible. In meetings and phone calls that Anash had with members of Likud, it was obvious that the brainwashing of the Israeli media was quite similar to Pravda in Russia, and worse.

When people began understanding what was really going on, and the significance of Sharon's plan, the work of convincing them became that much easier.

So we cannot sit back, and all the excuses about how it's hopeless and we can't change anything because the media is against us, are just that – excuses. The Likud referendum was just a test from Heaven to show us that if we put in the effort, we'll see results.

The Rebbe told us that we cannot give up protesting even if we don't think it helps matters. Unfortunately, in recent years, we have been hearing more and more people from amongst ourselves saying that protesting is ineffective and we shouldn't bother.

The referendum proved them wrong.



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DR. YAAKOV LIEBER RESNICK A”H

Hundreds of Anash and T’mimim, led by the rabbanim of Crown Heights and the secretariat, attended the funeral of Dr. Resnick, who was one of the Rebbe’s doctors in 5738 (1977). After the Rebbe’s heart attack on Simchas Torah 5738, Dr. Weiss came from Chicago and stayed with the Rebbe until the beginning of Cheshvan. Since he had a senior position at the hospital in Chicago, he had to return to his job. Before he left, Dr. Resnick came to replace him.

Dr. Resnick wasn’t married at the time. He worked as a military doctor in Hawaii and was an observant Jew. In order to leave his position in Hawaii, he had to use connections high up in the White House. The Rebbe’s position was taken into consideration, and Dr. Resnick was allowed to stay in New York.

At first, Dr. Resnick stayed in 770 twenty-four hours a day. His bedroom was Rabbi Dovid Raskin’s office, and the secretaries watched the monitor that was attached to the Rebbe. As soon as they saw an irregularity they woke up Dr. Resnick.

In his capacity as doctor, he had to make vital decisions that were in line with the Rebbe’s wishes, though they went against the rules of medicine. He later related that he saw how the Rebbe’s life was above the laws of medicine and nature. This was the impetus for him to become the Rebbe’s chassid.

As the Rebbe’s condition improved, Dr. Resnick spent his free time learning Gemara and sichos of the Rebbe with bachurim in the zal of 770. Since the Rebbe’s door was open to him, he would also ask the Rebbe his questions on the sichos and received many answers.

When the Rebbe’s condition improved even more,

the Rebbe went home on Rosh Chodesh Kislev. For a number of weeks the Rebbe walked home and Dr. Resnick accompanied him.

Dr. Resnick worked at a hospital in New York and divided his time between the Rebbe and the hospital.

In 5740, he married his wife Molly. The Rebbe was personally involved in this shidduch, and when they wanted to set the wedding date for Yud Shvat, the Rebbe said it should be on the 9th of Shvat, since he didn’t want to take away from the simcha. The chuppa took place opposite the Rebbe’s house, and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a”h stood at her window and watched.



The next day, at the farbrengen, the Rebbe said Sheva Brachos should take place at the farbrengen.

The Resnicks lived in Detroit for a few years and more recently moved to Manhattan. Throughout the years, Dr. Resnick was one of the Rebbe’s team of doctors, and he visited the Rebbe many times and enjoyed a special relationship with the Rebbe. Dr. Resnick sent his children to Lubavitch schools and they are chassidim of

the Rebbe. Just two months ago, the oldest son married.

A few months before the passing of the Rebbetzin in 5748, Mrs. Resnick visited the Rebbe with her children. The Rebbetzin graciously hosted them even though the little children ran around the house. The Rebbetzin took a great interest in them, and in the course of the visit, she said, “My husband can never thank your husband enough for his devoted care.”

This past year Dr. Resnick was diagnosed with the dreaded disease, and he passed away at the young age of 58.